



HRSA
Health Workforce
Substance Use Disorder
Treatment and Recovery
Loan Repayment Program

Full-Time Service Opportunities

Fiscal Year 2021
Application & Program Guidance

June 8, 2021

Application Submission Deadline: **July 22 2021 7:30 p.m. ET**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Health Resources and Services Administration
Bureau of Health Workforce
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

For questions, please call 1-800-221-9393 (TTY: 1-877-897-9910) Monday through Friday (except federal holidays) 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. § 295h (Section 781 of the Public Health Service Act)

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PRIVACY ACT NOTIFICATION STATEMENT

General

This information is provided pursuant to the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579), as amended, for individuals supplying information for inclusion in a system of records.

Statutory Authority

42 U.S.C. § 295h (Section 781 of the Public Health Service Act).

Purposes and Uses

The purpose of the Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery (STAR) Loan Repayment Program (LRP) is to recruit and retain medical, nursing, behavioral/mental health clinicians and paraprofessionals who provide direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder. The STAR LRP participants must provide services in either a county (or a municipality, if not contained within any county) where the mean drug overdose death rate per 100,000 people over the past three years for which official data is available from the State, is higher than the most recent available national average overdose death rate per 100,000 people, as reported by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), or in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) designated for Mental Health. The information that applicants submit will be used to evaluate their eligibility, qualifications, and suitability for participating in the STAR LRP. In addition, information from other sources will be considered (e.g., credit bureau reports and National Practitioner Data Bank reports).

An individual's application, supporting documentation, related correspondence, and data will be maintained in a system of records to be used within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to monitor STAR LRP-related activities. The information may also be disclosed outside the Department, as permitted by the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), to the Congress, the National Archives, the Government Accountability Office, and pursuant to court order and various routine uses as described in the System of Record Notice 09-15-0037 for Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program Records, which is in the process of being updated.

The name of a STAR LRP participant, discipline, specialty, business address, business telephone number, and service obligation completion date may be provided to professional placement firms in response to requests made under the FOIA.

Effects of Nondisclosure

Disclosure of the information sought is voluntary; however, if not submitted, except for the replies to questions related to Race/Ethnicity (Section 3 of the online application for STAR LRP), an application may be considered incomplete and therefore may not be considered for an award under this announcement.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT

The purpose of this information collection is to obtain information through the Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery (STAR) Loan Repayment Program (LRP), which is used to assess a STAR LRP applicant's eligibility and qualifications for the LRP and to obtain information for STAR facility applicants. Clinicians interested in participating in the STAR LRP must submit an application to the STAR LRP, and health care facilities must submit a STAR Site Application to determine the eligibility to participate in the STAR as an approved facility. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this information collection is 0906-0058 and it is valid until 12/31/2023. This information collection is required to obtain or retain a benefit (42 U.S.C. § 295h (Section 781 of the Public Health Service Act)). Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to HRSA Reports Clearance Officer, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14N136B, Rockville, Maryland, 20857 or paperwork@hrsa.gov.

Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

In accordance with applicable federal laws and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services policy, the Department does not discriminate on the basis of any non-merit factor, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability (physical or mental), age, status as a parent, or genetic information.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Please read the Application and Program Guidance (Guidance) in its entirety before proceeding with an application. The Guidance explains in detail the rights and obligations of individuals selected to participate in STAR LRP. A complete understanding of the commitment to serve at a STAR LRP-approved facility and the financial, legal, and other consequences of failing to perform that commitment is critical to successful completion of the mandatory six-year service obligation associated with any STAR LRP award.

Important Dates

STAR LRP applicants should be aware of the following key dates:

- Application Launch Date: June 8, 2021
- Application Submission Deadline: July 22, 2021, 7:30 pm ET
- Employment Start Date: July 22, 2021
- Notification of Award: On or before September 30, 2021

Certain applicants who apply for the FY 2021 STAR LRP may be eligible for another LRP, depending on their discipline and STAR LRP-approved facility. FY 2021 STAR LRP applicants may also apply for another LRP; however, an applicant can only participate in one program at a time, and HRSA will only make one award. If HRSA determines that an applicant is eligible for more than one of the LRP, HRSA will contact the applicant to determine which program the applicant prefers. However, HRSA cannot guarantee that the applicant will be offered an award under any LRP program, or their preferred LRP program.

INTRODUCTION

The STAR LRP seeks eligible disciplines (see the "[Eligible Disciplines and Specialties](#)" section for a complete list of eligible disciplines) who provide direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder at a STAR LRP-approved facility located in either a county (or a municipality, if not contained within any county) where the mean drug overdose death rate per 100,000 people over the past three years for which official data is available from the State, is higher than the most recent available national average overdose death rate per 100,000 people, as reported by the CDC, or in a mental health HPSA (see definition of HPSA and overdose rate in the "[Definitions](#)" section).

The following applies to applicants who sign a STAR LRP contract:

- All disciplines (except psychology doctoral interns) who sign a STAR LRP contract, will be committing to provide six years of full-time employment that involves direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder at a STAR LRP-approved facility located in either a county where the overdose death rate for the past three years exceeds the national average or in a mental health HPSA.
- Psychology doctoral interns will be committing to provide full-time employment as psychologists upon completion of their internship for the remaining years of their six-year

service obligation. Both their internship and their full-time employment must involve direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder at a STAR LRP-approved facility located in either a county where the overdose death rate for the past three years exceeds the national average or in a mental health HPSA. Within 90 days of completing the internship, psychology doctoral interns must demonstrate that they:

- (1) have a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or equivalent) from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by the U.S. Department of Education;
- (2) passed the Examination for Professional Practice of Psychology;
- (3) have the ability to practice independently and unsupervised as a psychologist;
- (4) have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) from the state in which they intend to practice that allows them to practice independently and without direct clinical supervision under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility; and
- (5) are employed at a STAR LRP-approved facility.

If, for any reason, a participant is unable to complete their service obligation at their initial STAR LRP-approved facility, they will be required to transfer to another STAR LRP-approved facility to fulfill their service obligation.

By statute, the STAR LRP funds are not exempt from federal income and employment taxes. These funds are included as wages when determining benefits under the Social Security Act (see the [“STAR LRP Award Taxes and Financial Information”](#) section).

Service Options and Award Amounts

The STAR LRP will pay up to \$250,000 to awardees in exchange for six years of full-time employment that involves direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder. Awardees will receive a lump sum payment totaling the principal of and interest on each eligible loan outstanding on the date the individual began service, up to \$250,000. For a more detailed definition of full-time service see the [“Service Obligation”](#) section.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to apply for a STAR LRP award, all applicants must:

- 1) Be a U.S. citizen (either U.S. born or naturalized), national, or permanent resident with a non-conditional [Permanent Resident Card](#) (green card);
- 2) Meet applicable education requirements and have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration in the discipline in which

they are applying to serve, in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws; (See the [Required Credentials for Eligible Disciplines](#) section for additional details).

- 3) Be employed at, or accepted a position at a STAR LRP – approved facility that is located in either a county (or a municipality, if not contained within any county) where the mean drug overdose death rate per 100,000 people over the past three years for which official data is available from the State, is higher than the most recent available national average overdose death rate per 100,000 people, as reported by the CDC, **OR** in a mental health HPSA. For the FY 21 application cycle, the STAR LRP will use 21.6 as the most recent available national average overdose death rate per 100,000 people, as reported by the CDC. The STAR LRP will also use the mental health HPSA data as of the application submission deadline throughout that fiscal year’s application and award cycle.
- 4) Submit a complete application on or before July 22, 2021. See the instructions for “Completing an Application” in the [Application Information](#) section later in this Guidance; and
- 5) Be employed by, or have accepted a position at, a STAR LRP-approved facility where employment will begin by July 22, 2021.

Among eligible applicants, the STAR LRP determines awardees using the following ranking factors.

Application Ranking Factors

The STAR LRP will rank applicants in the tiers as reflected in the “[Application Ranking Criteria](#)” table below. The STAR LRP will use county (or a municipality, if not contained within any county) overdose mortality rates where the “mean” drug overdose death rate per 100,000 people over the past three years for which official data is available from the state, is higher than the most recent available national average overdose death rate per 100,000 people, as reported by the CDC. The STAR LRP will also use the mental health HPSA data as of the application submission deadline throughout that fiscal year’s application and award cycle.

Application Ranking Criteria

Clinician Type	STAR LRP-approved Facility Requirement	Ranking within each tier
Tier 1: County Overdose Mortality Rate		
Eligible disciplines	A STAR LRP-approved facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest County Overdose Mortality rate • Duration of tenure at STAR LRP-approved facility
Tier 2: Mental Health HPSA		
Eligible disciplines	A STAR LRP-approved facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest Mental health HPSA • Duration of tenure at STAR LRP-approved facility

Eligible Disciplines and Specialties

The following disciplines are eligible to apply for the STAR LRP, so long as the primary intent and function of the position is the direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder, and they meet the discipline-specific training, licensure, certification and credentialing requirements described in the Required Credentials for Eligible Disciplines section of this Guidance:

- certified nursing assistants (CNAs)
- certified medical assistants
- licensed occupational therapists
- licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs)
- licensed professional counselors (LPCs)
- marriage and family therapists (MFTs)
- master's level social workers
- psychologists
- counselors
- marriage and family therapists
- psychiatric mental health practitioners
- occupational therapists
- psychology doctoral interns
- behavioral health paraprofessionals (including but not limited to community health workers, peer recovery specialists, case managers and health navigators. See full list for behavioral health paraprofessionals in the [“Definitions”](#) section)
- physicians
- physician assistants
- nurse practitioners
- registered nurses
- certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs)
- certified nurse-midwives (CNMs)
- clinical nurse specialists (CNSs)
- licensed practical nurses (LPNs)
- psychiatric nurse specialists (PNSs)
- pharmacists,
- substance use disorder (SUD) counselors

Training, Licensure, Certification, Registration and Required Credentials

STAR LRP applicants must demonstrate satisfactory professional competence and conduct and meet discipline and specialty-specific education, training, licensure and certification requirements, as described below.

Applicants who intend to practice under STAR LRP as federal employees, federal contractors, or employees of a tribal health program (see the [“Definitions”](#) section) in a state in which the tribal health program provides services described in its contract, **must** have a current, full, permanent,

unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate or registration (whichever is applicable) in a state.

All other applicants must have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate or registration (whichever is applicable), as set forth below, in the state where their STAR LRP-approved facility is located, unless otherwise noted below.

The STAR LRP reserves the right to request documented proof of completion of discipline-specific advanced training (residency, certification, fellowships, etc.) and any other requirements set forth below. Please note that while an applicant may be licensed in the state of intended practice, there may be additional requirements identified below that must be met in order to be eligible for the STAR LRP. See the "[Telehealth Policies](#)" section for requirements pertaining to participants providing telehealth services.

Supplemental SUD Credentials

The following supplemental SUD credentials may be required based on the participant's discipline. All participants who are required to have SUD credentials by virtue of their discipline will be required to submit documentation of their SUD credentials:

- SUD Licensure/Certification. SUD licensure/certification refers to a state-issued license or certification to provide SUD treatment that is granted to a health professional in an eligible discipline or specialty (see the "[Eligible Disciplines and Specialties](#)" section above), and is distinct from the licensure/certification that SUD counselors must have in order to practice SUD counseling. SUD licensure/certification must meet national standards as recognized by either the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC); the Association for Addiction Professionals (NAADAC); or International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC).
- A Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Registration Certificate that clearly reflects the possession of a DATA 2000 Waiver.

HRSA understands that some applicants will be dually credentialed at the time of award under the STAR LRP. All program participants are expected to maintain all current licenses, registration and/or certifications (as applicable) throughout the duration of their full-time service obligation; failure to do so may result in a breach of their STAR LRP contract.

NOTE: Please be advised that the National Practitioner Data Bank will be queried for all applicable disciplines as part of the application process.

Required Credentials for Eligible Disciplines

All applicants that fall under these disciplines should refer to the "Supplemental SUD Credentials" section above for applicable SUD requirements.

- *Allopathic (MD) or Osteopathic (DO) Physicians including Psychiatrists* must have:

- i. **Educational Requirement**
A certificate of completion of a M.D. or D.O. at a **school or program** accredited by **any** recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**
Completed a residency program approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate or registration (whichever is applicable) in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.
- Physician Assistants (PAs), including those with a mental health specialty, must practice under the supervision of a physician and have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
A certificate of completion or an associate, bachelor's, or master's degree from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**
Certified as a Physician Assistant by the state in which they intend to practice, if required by state law;
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate or registration (whichever is applicable) from the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.
 - Nurse Practitioners (NPs) must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
A master's degree, post-master's certificate, or doctoral degree from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**
Certified as a nurse practitioner in the state in which they intend to practice, if required by state law.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license,

certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) from the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

- *Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs)* must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
A master’s degree or post-baccalaureate certificate from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education;
 - ii. **Certification Requirements**
Certified as a Certified Nurse Midwife in the state in which they intend to practice, if required by state law.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) from the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

- *Pharmacists* must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
A health professional degree from a School of Pharmacy or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**
No additional certifications required.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) that allows them to practice independently and without direct clinical supervision in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

- *Registered Nurses (RNs)* must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
A degree from a school of nursing accredited by the U.S. Department of Education and has passed the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN).
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**
No additional certifications required.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**

A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) that allows them to practice independently and without direct clinical supervision in the state in which they intend to practice under STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

- *Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs)* must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
A master's degree from a school of nursing accredited by the U.S. Department of Education and has passed the NCLEX-RN.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**
Certified as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist in the state in which they intend to practice, if required by state law.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) that allows them to practice independently and without direct clinical supervision in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

- *Psychologists* must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
A doctoral degree (Ph.D. or equivalent) from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**
Passed the Examination for Professional Practice of Psychology; the ability to practice independently and unsupervised as a Psychologist.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) from the state in which they intend to practice that allows them to practice independently and without direct clinical supervision under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

- *Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs)* must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
A master's degree or doctoral degree in social work from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**

Successfully passed the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Clinical or Advanced Generalist licensing exam prior to July 1, 1998, or the ASWB Clinical Exam on or after July 1, 1998;

-OR-

Successfully passed the LCSW Standard Written Examination and the Clinical Vignette Examination; and completed state required number of years or hours of clinical social work experience under the supervision of a licensed independent social worker and passed the clinical level of the ASWB exam.

iii. **Licensure Requirement**

A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) that allows them to practice independently and without direct clinical supervision as an LCSW, from the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

• Psychology Doctoral Interns must have:

i. **Educational Requirement**

Must be enrolled or have completed a psychology doctoral degree program (Ph.D. or equivalent) directly related to full professional work in psychology from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.

ii. **Certification Requirement**

Must be enrolled and participating in a full-time internship at an eligible STAR LRP – approved facility.

iii. **Licensure Requirement**

No additional licensure requirements.

NOTE: By signing a STAR LRP contract, psychology doctoral interns agree to provide full-time employment as psychologists upon completion of their internship for the remaining years of their six-year service obligation. Within 90 days of completing the internship, psychology doctoral interns must demonstrate that they:

- (1) have completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or equivalent) from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by the U.S. Department of Education;
- (2) passed the Examination for Professional Practice of Psychology;
- (3) have the ability to practice independently and unsupervised as a psychologist;
- (4) have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) from the state in which they intend to practice that allows them to practice independently and without direct clinical supervision under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility; and
- (5) are employed at a STAR LRP-approved facility.

If these requirements are not met within 90 days of the completion of the internship, the participant may be in breach of the STAR LRP contract and liable for damages. (See the "[Breaching the STAR LRP Contract](#)" section).

- *Psychiatric Nurse Specialists (PNSs)* must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**

A master's degree or higher degree in nursing from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education with a specialization in psychiatric/mental health and two years of postgraduate supervised clinical experience in psychiatric/mental health nursing;

-OR-

A baccalaureate or higher degree in nursing from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by the U.S. Department of Education.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**

Certified as a Psychiatric Nurse Specialist in the state in which they intend to practice, if required by state law.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**

A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) to practice at the level of licensure that allows them to practice independently and without direct clinical supervision as a RN (or PNS, if applicable) in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

- *Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs)* must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**

A master's or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**

Certified as a marriage and family therapists in the state in which they intend to practice, if required by state law.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirements**

A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) to practice independently and unsupervised as an MFT in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

- Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
A master’s degree or higher degree with a major study in counseling from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education; and at least two years of postgraduate supervised counseling experience;
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**
No additional certifications required
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) to practice independently and unsupervised as an LPC in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.
-OR-
If such licensure is not available in the state of intended practice, have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) to practice independently and unsupervised as an LPC in a state and be practicing independently and unsupervised and in a manner consistent with state law in the state where they intend to practice (e.g. Licensed Mental Health Counselor can apply as an LPC).
- Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Counselors must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
A bachelor’s degree or higher in a health professional field of study from a school accredited by the U.S. Department of Education nationally recognized regional or state institutional accrediting agency. Certification or licensure requirements are applicable to the state in which they practice.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**
Certified as a SUD counselor in the state in which they intend to practice.

-OR-
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
A state-issued license to provide SUD treatment.
- Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs) must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**

A master's degree or higher from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.

i. **Certification Requirement**

Certified as a clinical nurse specialist in the state in which they intend to practice, if required by state law.

ii. **Licensure Requirement**

A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) that allows them to practice in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

• *Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) must have:*

i. **Educational Requirement**

A postsecondary non-degree certificate or diploma from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.

ii. **Certification Requirement**

Certified as a CNA in the state in which they intend to practice, if required by state law.

iii. **Licensure Requirement**

A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) that allows them to practice under the supervision of a RN, or LPN in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

• *Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) must have:*

i. **Educational Requirement**

Completed a board approved nursing education program accredited by National American Nurse Association League for Nursing (NLNAC) or similar accrediting bodies.

ii. **Certification Requirement**

No additional certification required.

iii. **Licensure Requirement**

Passed the NCLEX-PN and have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) that allows them to practice in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.

• *Licensed Occupational Therapists must have:*

- i. **Educational Requirement**
A bachelor's degree in occupational health from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**
Certified as a licensed occupational therapist in the state in which they intend to practice, if required by state law.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) that allows them to practice in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.
- *Certified Medical Assistants (CMAs) must have:*
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
Successfully completed a medical assisting program from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by U.S. Department of Education.
 - ii. **Certification**
Certified as a certified medical assistant in the state in which they intend to practice.
 - iii. **Licensure Requirement**
No state licensure requirements.
 - *Behavioral Health-Related Paraprofessionals:*
Individuals who are not mental or behavioral health service professionals, but work at the first stage of contact with individuals and families who are seeking mental or behavioral health services, including substance abuse prevention and treatment services. This job classification includes occupations such as mental health worker, peer support counselor, peer support specialist, community health worker, health educator, outreach worker, social services aide, substance abuse/addictions worker, youth worker, promotor(a), recovery manager, recovery mentor, recovery support specialist, and recovery coach/guide. Behavioral health-related paraprofessionals must meet the educational requirements for the state they intend to practice in and must have:
 - i. **Educational Requirement**
Successfully completed a state's education requirement to be certified as one of the behavioral health paraprofessional classifications identified above.
 - ii. **Certification Requirement**

Certified as a behavioral health-related paraprofessional in the state in which they intend to practice.

iii. **Licensure Requirement**

No state licensure requirements.

Selection Factors

HRSA utilizes the selection factors below while reviewing eligible STAR LRP applications to determine who will be offered an award.

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria outlined above must also demonstrate that they:

- (1) **Have a history of honoring prior legal obligations.** HRSA will perform a hard inquiry¹ with the credit bureaus to make the award decision. STAR LRP applicants who do not have a history of honoring prior legal obligations, as evidenced by one or more of the following factors, will not be selected:
 - a. Default on any federal payment obligations, e.g., Department of Education student loans, Health Education Assistance Loans, Nursing Student Loans, Federal Housing Administration Loans, federal income tax liabilities, federally-guaranteed/insured loans (e.g., student or home mortgage loans) or any non-federal payment obligations (e.g., court-ordered child support payments or state tax liabilities), even if the applicant is currently considered to be in good standing by that creditor.
 - b. Write off of any federal debt as uncollectible or waiver of any federal service or payment obligation.
 - c. Default on a prior service obligation, e.g., applicants who have defaulted on a prior service obligation to the federal government, a state or local government, or other entity, even if the applicant subsequently satisfied that obligation through service, monetary payment or other means.
 - d. Any judgment liens arising from federal debt.
 - e. Failure/refusal to provide appropriate permission/consent for HRSA to access the participant's credit report and **failure/refusal to unfreeze a frozen** credit report.
- (2) **Are not in breach of any service obligation.** Applicants who are in breach of a health professional service obligation to a federal, state, or other entity will not be selected to participate in the STAR LRP.
- (3) **Do not have an existing service obligation and agree not to incur a service obligation that would be performed concurrently or overlap with their STAR LRP service obligation.** Applicants who are already obligated to a federal, state, or other entity for professional

¹ According to the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, these inquiries “are typically inquiries by lenders after you apply for credit. These inquiries will impact your credit score because most credit scoring models look at how recently and how frequently you apply for credit.” (Source: [“What’s a credit inquiry?”](#) Consumer Financial Protection Bureau website.)

practice or service will not be selected for an award unless that obligation will be completely satisfied prior to commencement of the STAR LRP service (see the "[Service Obligation](#)" section). Further, participants who subsequently enter into other service obligations (e.g., a [State Loan Repayment Program](#)) will be subject to the breach of contract provision (see the "[Breaching the STAR LRP Contract](#)" section). **EXCEPTION:**

- a. Applicants whose outstanding service obligation to another entity would be completed by the deadline for meeting the STAR LRP service obligation requirements (July 22, 2021).
- b. Members of a Reserve component of the Armed Forces or National Guard who are not on active duty prior to receiving a STAR LRP award **are** eligible for the program. Reservists should understand the following:
 - Military training or service performed by reservists will not satisfy the STAR LRP service obligation. If a participant's military training and/or service, in combination with the participant's other absences from the STAR LRP-approved facility, will exceed seven weeks per service year, the participant should request a suspension. The STAR LRP service obligation end date will be extended to compensate for the break in STAR LRP service.
 - If the reservist is deployed, they are expected to return to the STAR LRP-approved facility where they were serving prior to deployment. If unable to do so, the reservist must request a transfer to another STAR LRP-approved facility. If the reservist fails to seek a transfer, they may be in breach of their service obligation.

(4) Are not currently excluded, debarred, suspended, or disqualified by a federal agency.

Applicants are required to report certain information, which is described in the "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Disqualification and Related Matters" section of the online application. The applicant should sign the certification that is applicable to their situation. As a condition of participating in the STAR LRP, a participant must agree to provide immediate written notice to the STAR LRP if the participant learns that they failed to make a required disclosure or that a disclosure is now required due to changed circumstances. HRSA will verify each participant's status through the U.S. Department of the Treasury's "Do Not Pay" site.

Eligible and Ineligible Educational Loans

STAR LRP applicants must have eligible post-secondary or higher education loans. Eligible loans are:

1. Any loan for education or training for a substance use disorder treatment employment.
2. Any loan under part E of subchapter VI of the Public Health Service Act (relating to nursing student loans).
3. Any Federal Direct Stafford Loan, Federal Direct PLUS Loan, Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, or Federal Direct Consolidation Loan (as such terms are used in section 455 of the Higher Education Act of 1965).
4. Any Federal Perkins Loan under part E of title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

A participant will receive loan repayment funding to be applied to the principal of and interest on eligible loans outstanding on the date the individual began service. Documentation of the educational loans must be submitted with their online application to the STAR LRP by July 22, 2021, which is the FY 21 STAR LRP application deadline.

Consolidated or refinanced loans may be considered for repayment, so long as they include only eligible educational loans of the applicant. If an otherwise eligible educational loan is consolidated/refinanced with ineligible debt of the applicant, **no** portion of the consolidated/refinanced loan will be eligible for loan repayment. For loans to remain eligible, applicants/ participants must keep their eligible educational loans segregated from all other debts. In addition, eligible educational loans consolidated with loans owed by any other person, such as a spouse or child, are ineligible for repayment.

Loans that do *not* qualify for loan repayment include, but are not limited to:

1. Loans for which the applicant incurred during a service obligation, which will not be fulfilled before the deadline for submission of the STAR LRP application (July 22, 2021).
2. Loans for which the associated documentation cannot identify which loan was solely applicable to the post-secondary, undergraduate, or graduate education of the applicant.
3. Loans that have been repaid in full
4. Parent PLUS Loans (made to parents)
5. Personal lines of credit
6. Loans subject to cancellation
7. Residency and relocation loans
8. Credit card debt
9. Tuition reimbursement

NOTE: All eligible loans must have documentation to indicate they were contemporaneous with the education received. Loan documentation will be verified by contacting lenders/holders and reviewing the applicant's credit report.

Award Process

Only the Secretary of HHS or their designee can grant a STAR LRP award. Applicants selected as finalists will receive a Confirmation of Interest (COI) email with instructions to electronically sign and return the STAR LRP contract and provide banking information to facilitate the electronic transfer of the award funds (after the contract is approved by the Secretary of HHS or their designee).

An applicant's signature alone on the STAR LRP contract does not constitute a contractual agreement. The STAR LRP contract becomes effective on the date it is countersigned by the Secretary of HHS or their designee. It is anticipated that all FY 2021 STAR LRP contracts will be countersigned on or before **September 30, 2021**.

An applicant may withdraw their application any time **before** a contract is countersigned by the Secretary or their designee (see the ["Confirmation of Interest"](#) section). **After** a contract has taken

effect, the Secretary or their designee may terminate the contract only under the circumstance set forth in the "[Contract Termination](#)" section below.

Once an applicant has been selected for an award, the STAR LRP will notify the applicant with information for logging into the [Bureau of Health Workforce \(BHW\) Customer Service Portal](#). This web-based system will allow STAR LRP participants to communicate with the program representatives and manage several customer service inquiries, such as contact information changes. The participant's award letter (available in the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#)) will note the beginning and estimated end date of the service obligation. A participant's end date may be extended depending on circumstances arising during the term of their service obligation.

Awards are disbursed in the form of a lump sum payment and will be electronically issued to the bank account provided by the participant approximately 90 days after the contract start date.

NOTE: The U.S. Treasury Department is authorized to offset STAR LRP payments for application to delinquent federal and state debts, including delinquent child support payments.

Once a contract is in place, the participant is encouraged to participate in the STAR LRP new Participant Webinar that will review program requirements. Participants will be notified by email of the new Participant Webinar as well as other upcoming webinars and other training opportunities.

UNDERSTANDING THE STAR LRP CONTRACT

Participants of the STAR LRP should be aware of the following provisions:

- All Disciplines except Psychology Doctoral Interns are employed by a STAR LRP-approved facility and commit to provide full-time employment in direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder for six years at a STAR LRP-approved facility located in either a county where the overdose death rate for the past three years exceeds the national average or a mental health HPSA
- Psychology doctoral interns will be committing to provide full-time employment as psychologists upon completion of their internship for the remaining years of their six-year service obligation. Both their internship and their full-time employment must involve direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder at a STAR LRP-approved facility located in either a county where the overdose death rate for the past three years exceeds the national average or a mental health HPSA. Within 90 days of completing the internship, psychology doctoral interns must demonstrate that they:
 1. have a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or equivalent) from a school or program accredited by any recognized body or bodies approved for such purpose by the U.S. Department of Education;
 2. passed the Examination for Professional Practice of Psychology;
 3. have the ability to practice independently and unsupervised as a psychologist;
 4. have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) from the state in which they intend to

- practice that allows them to practice independently and without direct clinical supervision under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility; and
5. Continue to be employed at a STAR LRP-approved facility.

If these requirements are not met within 90 days of the completion of the internship, the participant may be in breach of the STAR LRP contract and liable for damages (see the [“Breaching the STAR LRP Contract”](#) section). Additionally, the participant’s service obligation end date will be extended to account for time between the conclusion of the internship and the start of eligible full-time employment as a psychologist.

Participants are expected to begin full-time SUD treatment employment immediately on the date that the STAR LRP contract becomes effective, which is the date it is countersigned by the Secretary or their designee. The participant’s award letter will note the beginning and projected end dates of the service obligation. In addition, this information is contained in the participant profile on the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). ***Participants will not receive credit for any employment at a STAR LRP-approved facility prior to the effective date of their STAR LRP contract.***

NOTE: Participants who fail to begin or complete in good faith the years of service for which payments were made to the participant may be in breach of the STAR LRP contract and incur the damages described in the [“Breaching the STAR LRP Contract”](#) section.

Contract Termination

An applicant becomes a participant in the STAR LRP only upon entering into a contract with the Secretary of HHS. The contract becomes fully executed (and effective) on the date that the Secretary (or the Secretary’s designee) countersigns the contract. For FY 2021 STAR LRP contracts, the Secretary may terminate a STAR LRP contract at any time prior to the awarded individual receiving funds due under the contract. Once the individual receives funds, the contract cannot be terminated.

STAR LRP-approved Facilities Information

All STAR LRP-approved facilities must be located in either a county (or a municipality, if not contained within any county) where the mean drug overdose death rate per 100,000 people over the past three years for which official data is available from the State, is higher than the most recent available national average overdose death rate per 100,000 people, as reported by the CDC, or in a mental HPSA.

Applicants who work at more than one STAR LRP-approved facility (e.g., several satellite clinics) must include all STAR LRP-approved locations in their application by selecting from the drop-down menu and initiating an electronic Employment Verification Form (EVF) for each STAR LRP-approved facility. Selecting a STAR LRP-approved facility where the applicant is not providing direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder will disqualify their application.

Please be advised that some organizations that operate STAR LRP-approved facilities may also operate other ineligible facilities in close proximity to the STAR LRP-approved facility. Such facilities may even share similar names and addresses as the STAR LRP-approved facility, but are not approved for STAR LRP. Therefore, STAR LRP applicants must pay very close attention to both the name and address of the STAR LRP-approved facility location(s) selected in their application. Also, if an applicant receives an email in the later stages of the application process, confirming the applicant's continued interest in an LRP award (i.e., a Confirmation of Interest), the applicant must verify that the name and address of the STAR LRP-facility listed in COI is correct. Errors made by the applicant and/or the STAR LRP-approved facility Point of Contact (POC) during the application process will not be considered grounds for voiding a STAR LRP contract following the termination deadline, and may result in the STAR LRP participant breaching their contract.

Facilities eligible for STAR LRP include but are not limited to the following:

- Substance use disorder treatment program
- Private physician practice
- Hospital or health system-affiliated inpatient treatment center or outpatient clinic (including an academic medical center-affiliated treatment program)
- Correctional facility or program
- Youth detention center or program
- Inpatient psychiatric facility
- Crisis stabilization unit
- Community health center
- Community mental health or other specialty community behavioral health center
- Recovery center
- School
- Community-based organization
- Telehealth platform
- Migrant health center
- Health program or facility operated by an Indian tribe or tribal organization
- Federal medical facility

To be approved for STAR LRP, the facility must submit to HRSA the facility type and the recruitment contact(s) through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). HRSA will review and approve facilities prior to and during the STAR LRP application cycle. Please visit <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/funding/star-lrp-facility-types.pdf> for more detailed instructions.

Facility Point of Contact Roles and Responsibilities

For the STAR LRP, the facility POC is an employee of the facility who has agreed to and is qualified to perform the applicant's EVF, as well as the participant's In-Service Verifications (ISVs) – including verification that the participant is meeting their SUD treatment employment obligations – throughout the obligated service period. For additional information see the "[Service Verification](#)" section. Once

initiated by the applicant, the POC must complete the online EVF in order for the application to be completed and ultimately submitted by the applicant, prior to the application cycle deadline. The applicant should initiate regular communication and follow up with the POC to ensure that EVFs and ISVs are accurately completed and in a timely manner.

The POC will receive periodic reminders to complete the EVF; however, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the EVF is complete and accurate, within a timeframe that will allow them to submit the STAR LRP application by the application deadline. The applicant will receive notification that the POC has completed the EVF and should work to complete and submit the application as soon as possible. The applicant must contact the POC to resolve any concerns regarding the responses provided on the EVF.

Facility Contract vs. STAR LRP Contract

It is important to remember that the participant's contract with the STAR LRP is separate and independent from any employment contract with the STAR LRP-approved facility. Employment contract negotiations are solely the responsibility of the clinician and are between the clinician and the STAR LRP-approved facility. HRSA strongly discourages employers from considering the STAR LRP funds as income to the clinician when negotiating the clinician's salary.

Please note that the STAR LRP requires a participant to work a specified minimum number of hours per week (see the "[Service Obligation](#)" section). If the participant's employment contract stipulates fewer hours (and their salary is based on those hours), the participant is still required to meet the STAR LRP service obligation requirements, and the participant's STAR LRP-approved facility administrator must verify the participant's total work hours and the STAR LRP full-time work status (see the "[Service Verification](#)" section) every six months during the participant's period of obligated service.

SERVICE OBLIGATION REQUIREMENTS

Service Obligation

STAR LRP applicants must either: 1) be working at an approved STAR LRP facility or 2) have accepted an offer of full-time employment at a STAR LRP-approved facility.

The participant's service obligation begins on the date that the STAR LRP contract becomes effective, which is on the date it is countersigned by the HHS Secretary or their designee. The participant's award letter will note the beginning and projected end dates of the service obligation. In addition, this information is contained in the participant profile on the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). Participants will not receive service credit for any employment at a STAR LRP-approved facility prior to the effective date of their STAR LRP contract.

The last day of the service obligation is determined in whole years from the start date. For example, the last day of service for a participant with a six-year, full-time service obligation that began on July

15, 2021 would be July 14, 2027. Adjustments in the end date will be made by HRSA if a participant is away from the STAR LRP-approved facility for:

- more than 7 weeks (approximately 35 workdays) per service year *or*
- an authorized break in service (see “[Authorized Break from Service](#)” section below).
- The time between the end of a psychology doctoral intern’s internship and the start of their full-time employment as a psychologist.

Requirements for Full-Time SUD Treatment Employment for All Disciplines Except Psychology Doctoral Interns

For the purposes of the STAR LRP, full-time employment is defined as a minimum of 40 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks each service year. Of the 40 hours/week, a minimum of 32 hours must be spent providing direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder at the STAR LRP-approved facility, during normally scheduled office hours. Participants do not receive service credit for hours worked over the required 40 hours/week and excess hours cannot be applied to any other work week. Time spent “on call” will not be counted toward the service obligation, except to the extent the provider is providing patient care during that period.

Requirements for Full-Time SUD Treatment Employment for Psychology Doctoral Interns

For the purposes of the STAR LRP, full-time employment is defined as the active participation in a full-time internship at a STAR LRP- approved facility. Upon completion of the internship, psychology doctoral interns must be employed as psychologists and meet the full-time employment requirements outlined above (see “[Requirements for Full-Time SUD Treatment Employment for All Disciplines Except Psychology Doctoral Interns](#)” section above).

Telehealth and Home Health Policies

Telehealth

STAR LRP participants, including those who are employed by a telehealth platform(s), must comply with all applicable STAR LRP eligibility requirements as well as, all applicable federal and state rules and policies regarding telemedicine services related to medication-assisted treatment (MAT).

The STAR LRP will consider telehealth as direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder when the STAR LRP-approved facility, including a telehealth platform, is located in either a county (or a municipality, if not contained within any county) where the mean drug overdose death rate per 100,000 people over the past three years for which official data is available from the State, is higher than the most recent available national average overdose death rate per 100,000 people, as reported by the CDC, or a mental health HPSA.

STAR LRP participants who are performing telehealth are encouraged to utilize HRSA’s [Telehealth Resource Centers \(TRCs\)](#). These centers provide free telehealth technical assistance and training for providers using telehealth. STAR LRP applicants are also encouraged to read a related September 2018

HHS policy statement, "[Telemedicine and Prescribing Buprenorphine for the Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder.](#)"

Home Health

Home visits may only be conducted at the direction of the STAR LRP-approved facility and cannot exceed more than eight (8) hours per week.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

Worksite Absences from the STAR LRP-approved Facilities

The information provided below pertains to compliance with the STAR LRP service obligation and is not a guarantee that a STAR LRP-approved facility will allow any specific amount of leave. Leave must be approved by your STAR LRP-approved facility; therefore, you cannot receive credit for leave if you are unemployed. If a participant works more than the minimum 40 hours per week, the only time spent away from the STAR LRP-approved facility that will need to be reported (see the "[Service Verification](#)" section below) and deducted from the allowed annual absences per service year (as set forth above) are the hours of absence that cause a participant's work hours to fall below HRSA's required minimum number of hours per week. The STAR LRP allows the following worksite absences:

- Participants are allowed to spend no more than 7 weeks (approximately 35 workdays) per service year away from the STAR LRP-approved facility for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness, or any other reason without triggering the need for a suspension. However, when circumstances occur that will prevent a participant from staying within this timeframe, the Secretary of HHS may, under certain circumstances, suspend (i.e., put "on hold") the STAR LRP service obligation.
- Personal/Medical/Parental/Active Duty Leave: Applicants who anticipate the need to be away from the STAR LRP-approved facility for more than 7 weeks (approximately 35 workdays) for **medical or personal leave, maternity/paternity/adoption leave or call to active duty in the armed forces** must submit a suspension request through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). All suspensions are granted for up to 90 days and will require supporting documentation. HRSA cannot guarantee that a suspension request will be approved. If a suspension is requested and approved, the participant's service obligation end date will be extended accordingly. Suspensions of the service obligation are only available when an authorized break in service is not available (See "[Authorized Break from Service](#)" below).

Authorized Break from Service

Participants who have completed at least two consecutive years of their service obligation are eligible to take up to a one-year break from service. If a participant of the STAR LRP is considering the option of an authorized break in service, please contact HRSA immediately through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

Service Verification

Every STAR LRP participant at a STAR LRP-approved facility must submit ISV documentation for each six months of service. The ISV form is available through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) and must be completed and electronically signed by the participant. Once completed by the participant, it will be forwarded to the facility POC at the participant's STAR LRP-approved facility for electronic verification. By electronically signing, the STAR LRP-approved facility POC will be certifying the participant's compliance or noncompliance with the applicable service obligation requirement during the prior six-month period. The ISV will also record the time spent away from the STAR LRP-approved facility (e.g., the total number of days during the six-month period that the participant fell below the minimum service obligation).

Participants who fail to complete and submit their ISV on time may jeopardize receiving service credit and may also be in breach of the STAR LRP contract. While HRSA will take steps to alert both the participant and the STAR LRP-approved facility to the due date for an ISV submission, it is the participant's responsibility to ensure that their STAR LRP-approved facility completes the verification in a timely manner.

Transfer Requests to another STAR LRP-Approved Facility

STAR LRP participants will only be allowed to transfer to other STAR LRP-approved facilities. If a STAR LRP participant would like to transfer to another STAR LRP-approved facility, the participant must submit a transfer request through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). Approval of all transfer requests are at HRSA's discretion and may depend on the circumstances of the participant's resignation or termination from the current STAR LRP-approved facility. The STAR LRP-approved facility change must be approved and processed by HRSA prior to the participant beginning to receive service credit for employment at the new STAR LRP-approved facility. If a participant begins employment at a STAR LRP-approved facility prior to HRSA's transfer approval, they may not receive service credit for the time period between their last day providing patient care at the initial STAR LRP-approved facility and resumption of service at the transfer STAR LRP-approved facility following HRSA's approval. If the proposed transfer STAR LRP-approved facility is disapproved by HRSA and the participant refuses assignment to another STAR LRP-approved facility, they may be in breach of their service contract.

Unemployment During Service Obligation

STAR LRP participants who resign or are terminated from their initial STAR LRP-approved facility must contact the STAR LRP program immediately through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). The STAR LRP will provide the participant ninety (90) days in which to obtain an offer and accept a position at an eligible STAR LRP-approved facility. **It is the participant's responsibility to obtain employment at an eligible STAR LRP-approved facility.** Participants who do not secure employment at a STAR LRP-approved facility within ninety (90) days will be in breach of their contract and recommended for default.

Breaching the STAR LRP Contract

Participants should immediately contact HRSA through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) if a situation arises that may result in the participant being unable to begin or complete their STAR LRP service obligation. While HRSA will, to the extent possible, work with participants to assist them in fulfilling the service obligation, participants are reminded that the failure to begin or complete any year of service for which payment was made to the participant may result in a breach of the STAR LRP contract.

Liquidated Damages

A participant who breaches a commitment to provide **full-time** direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder will become liable for liquidated damages to the United States in the amount of all STAR LRP payments made to the participant (including the amounts withheld for federal taxes), prorated for the days served, plus interest in accordance with applicable law. Liquidated damages will be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

Liquidated Damages Total = [(a)/(b) X (c)] + [d], where:

- (a) = the award amount participant receives plus amounts withheld for federal taxes,
- (b) = the number of days of obligated service
- (c) = the number of days left unserved, and
- (d) = interest in accordance with applicable law.

Any participant who breaches the STAR LRP contract and is placed in default will receive a notice from the Program Support Center's Debt Collection Center that specifies the amount the United States is entitled to recover. The debt will be due to be paid within one year from the date of the default notice. Failure to pay the debt by the due date has the following consequences:

- (1) **The debt may be reported as delinquent to credit reporting agencies.** During the one-year repayment period, the debt will be reported to credit reporting agencies as "current." If the debt becomes past due (i.e., remains unpaid at the end of the one-year repayment period), it will be reported as "delinquent."
- (2) **The debt may be referred to a debt collection agency and the Department of Justice (DOJ).** Any STAR LRP debt past due for 45 days may be referred to a debt collection agency. If the debt collection agency is unsuccessful in collecting payment, the debt will be referred to the DOJ for filing of a lawsuit against the debtor.
- (3) **Administrative Offset.** Federal or state payments due to the participant (e.g., an IRS or state income tax refund) may be offset by the Department of Treasury to pay a delinquent STAR LRP debt. Also, debtors who are federal employees may have up to 15 percent of their take-home pay garnished to pay a delinquent STAR LRP award debt.
- (4) **Licensure Sanctions.** In some states, health professions licensing or certification boards may impose sanctions, including suspension or revocation of a defaulter's professional license or certification, if the defaulter fails to satisfactorily address repayment of their STAR LRP award debt.

The Secretary may decline to impose liquidated damages if the Secretary determines, on the basis of information and documentation as may be required, that the completion of the service obligation is impossible because the participant suffers from a physical or mental disability that:

- (1) results in the permanent inability of the participant to perform the service obligation and
- (2) prevents the participant from engaging in substantial gainful employment that would allow the participant to pay the liquidated damages.

Participants (or their legal representative) who believe a breach falls within one of these two categories, may request that the Secretary decline to impose liquidated damages in connection with the breach. The Secretary will review the request in accordance with established standards and procedures used to evaluate waiver requests similar to the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, authorized under 42 U.S.C. § 254I-1. To submit a request, participants must upload a signed request letter, including the detailed reason(s) for the request, as an inquiry through the BHW Customer Service Portal. The participant must also furnish HRSA with any medical and financial documentation requested by HRSA. All documents can be submitted through the BHW Customer Service Portal. The decision to grant a request will be made exclusively by the Secretary. Please note that any request based on the medical condition of any individual other than the participant will be denied.

Sample Breach Scenario

Dr. Jane Smith entered into a six-year STAR LRP full-time service contract effective September 30, 2021 and was awarded \$100,000.00. Her service end date is September 29, 2027. She received \$100,000 in STAR LRP financial support to apply toward her eligible loans. She was terminated for cause by her STAR LRP-approved SUD treatment facility at the end of her workday on March 31, 2022. HRSA determines that she breached her STAR LRP contract on April 1, 2022, and served 184 days of her six-year (2,189-day) service obligation.

Dr. Smith is liable to the United States for an amount equal to the loan repayments received (including the amounts withheld for federal taxes), prorated for the days served plus interest in accordance with applicable law. Therefore, Dr. Smith would be liable for 2,005 unserved days.

In this example, using the above liquidated damages formula, Dr. Smith would be liable to the United States for \$91,594.33 plus interest in accordance with applicable law, and must pay that amount in full within one year from the date of the default notification.

STAR LRP AWARD TAXES AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Participants will receive awards in the form of a lump sum payment electronically, issued to the bank account provided by the participant approximately 90 days after the contract start date. STAR LRP award payments are subject to federal taxes. HRSA will withhold federal income tax and Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) tax (Social Security and Medicare) from a participant's award. Taxes are paid directly to the IRS on the participant's behalf. All STAR LRP payments and federal taxes withheld are reported to the participant and the IRS on a Form W-2 after the end of the tax year. Loan repayments may also be subject to state and local income taxes.

Participants who want additional funds withheld to cover the income tax on their awards should indicate the additional amount to be deducted on a Form W-4. Participants should consult the IRS regarding any additional tax obligations. HRSA does not provide tax advice, and all tax questions should be directed to a tax professional or the IRS through the TAX HELPLINE at 1-800-829-1040. The STAR LRP is unable to provide an individual with an after-tax calculation or any other tax related specific advice or information. The IRS encourages the use of their [Withholding Calculator](#) to perform a quick “paycheck checkup.”

Each January, participants will receive a W-2 Wage and Tax Statement for the taxable income received under the STAR LRP during the prior tax year. Participants may sign up to have their W-2 form posted in their [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) account. W-2 forms are posted no later than January 30 of each year. If the W-2 form is not available by that date, participants should submit an inquiry via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). Participants may also choose to have their W-2 form mailed to the address provided in the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). Participants must ensure their name, mailing and email addresses, and banking information are up to date.

Under the Treasury Offset Program, the U.S. Treasury Department is authorized to offset the STAR LRP award payments for delinquent federal and state debts, including delinquent child support.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

APPLICATION DEADLINE

A complete online application must be submitted via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) by 7:30 p.m. ET on July 22, 2021. All supporting documentation for the application must be uploaded before an individual can submit a complete application package. Applicants must upload all documents; HRSA will not accept documentation by fax or mail. The electronic EVF (see below) must also be completed before an applicant can submit their application.

Applicants should print and keep a copy of the completed application package for their records. Applicants are responsible for submitting a complete and accurate online application, including ALL required documentation in a legible format. **If during the initial review of the application, HRSA discovers that documentation is missing, or not legible, the application may be deemed “incomplete” and rejected. If the answers provided in the online application do not match the supporting/supplemental documents, or if the documentation provided does not accurately verify the answers provided, the application will be rejected.**

COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

A complete STAR LRP Online Application consists of:

1. Online Application;
2. Required Supporting Documentation; and
3. Additional Supplemental Documentation (if applicable).

It is required that the information in the online application match the submitted supporting documentation. Application packages will be initially reviewed to determine their completeness. Application packages deemed incomplete (e.g., missing or illegible information, or incomplete application materials) as of the application deadline will not be considered for funding.

The STAR LRP will not accept requests to update a submitted application or permit the submission/resubmission of incomplete, rejected, or otherwise delayed application materials after the deadline. In addition, HRSA staff will not fill in any missing information or contact applicants regarding missing information.

ONLINE APPLICATION

Applicants are required to complete each of the sections below to be able to submit an online application.

1. **STAR LRP Eligibility.** Answers to this section will determine the applicant’s baseline eligibility for participation in the STAR LRP. If an individual does not pass the initial screening portion of the online application, they will not be able to continue with the application. Please refer to the [“Eligibility Requirements”](#) section.

2. **Personal Information.** Answers to this section pertain to the applicant’s name, Social Security number, mailing and email addresses, and other contact information. Answers also pertain to individual and family background.
3. **Discipline, Training and Certification.** Answers to this section pertain to the applicant’s education, training, and licensure/certification.
4. **Employment.** In this section, applicants will search for and select the STAR LRP-approved facility/facilities where they are providing or will provide patient care. If any of the STAR LRP-approved facility/facilities are not listed in the search results, applicants are required to select the option below the search tool, which states “Click this box if your STAR LRP-approved facility is not listed in the search results.” If selected, the applicant is provided instructions on how to resolve the concern. A facility may request to become STAR-approved prior to and during the application cycle through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). If any of the sites where the applicant provides patient care do not meet STAR LRP facility(s) requirements, the provider is not eligible to apply. Applicants who work at more than one STAR LRP-approved facility (e.g., several satellite clinics) must include all service locations in their and initiate an electronic EVF for each STAR LRP-approved facility. Selecting a STAR LRP-approved facility where the applicant is not providing patient care will disqualify their application.
5. **Employment Verification Form** Once an applicant selects the STAR LRP-approved facility/facilities at which they are or will be working, the applicant will need to initiate an electronic EVF. Once initiated, the designated POC(s) at the STAR LRP-approved facility will be notified electronically through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) that an EVF has been requested by the applicant. When the POC(s) completes the EVF, the applicant will be notified. The STAR LRP-approved facility must complete the electronic EVF before an applicant will be allowed to submit the application. If an EVF is not submitted by every STAR LRP-approved facility identified by the applicant, the application cannot be submitted.
 - The POC(s) will receive periodic reminders to complete the EVF; however, it is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that the EVF is complete and accurate within a timeframe that will allow them to submit the STAR LRP application by the application deadline. The applicant will receive notification that the POC(s) has completed the EVF and should work to complete and submit the application as soon as possible. The applicant must contact the POC(s) to resolve any concerns regarding the responses provided on the EVF.
 - Applicants will have the ability to edit their application and initiate a new EVF if necessary. However, the STAR LRP-approved facility must complete the corrected EVF before the applicant can resubmit the application, which must be done before the application deadline or the applicant will be ineligible for an award. Errors made by applicants and/or STAR LRP-approved facility POC(s) cannot be corrected after the application deadline. Applicants who are determined to be out of compliance with their STAR LRP obligation may terminate their contract at any time if the individual

who has been awarded such contract has not received funds due under the contract. The participant may also return to compliance with their STAR LRP contract to successfully complete their service obligation.

- Additionally, if the STAR LRP applicant is working at multiple STAR LRP-approved facilities, each EVF should reflect the hours worked at each STAR LRP-approved facility. The total hours from all the EVFs must be at least 40 hours weekly for full-time employment.

6. **Loan Information.** Answers in this section pertain to each eligible loan for which an applicant is seeking repayment. All loans submitted will be verified to determine whether they are eligible for repayment under the STAR LRP through a review of the supporting documents, by contacting lenders/holders, and by checking the applicant's credit report. Applicants are strongly encouraged to view the link provided in the application for detailed instructions on the types of documents that need to be provided to help HRSA verify loan information. The following information must be entered about each of the loans applicants wish to submit for repayment, and the "[Required Supporting Documentation](#)" (see below) must be uploaded separately:

- a. Name and contact information for the lender/holder.
- b. Loan account number.
- c. Original amount disbursed.
- d. Original date of the loan.
- e. Current outstanding balance (no more than 30 days from the date of the STAR LRP application submission).
- f. Current interest rate.
- g. Type of loan. If a consolidated loan, additional questions will be asked:
 - i. Original date of consolidation.
 - ii. Original balance of consolidation.
 - iii. Account number.
- h. Purpose of loan.

Required Supporting Documentation

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide/upload supporting documentation into the online application. All information in the supporting documentation must match answers provided in the online application or the application will be deemed ineligible. An application will not be considered complete and an applicant may not submit an application, unless it contains each of the following required supporting documents:

1. **Proof of Status as a U.S. citizen, national or a permanent resident.** This document may include a copy of a birth certificate, the ID page of a current U.S. passport, a certificate of citizenship or naturalization or copy of [Permanent Resident Card](#) (green card). Copies of a driver's license or a Social Security card are not acceptable documents.

2. **Health Professional License, Certification or Registration.** Applicants will be required to submit proof of their current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate or registration (whichever is applicable), **with an expiration date** in the state in which they intend to practice under the STAR LRP or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.
3. **Health Professional Degree:** Certain applicants may be required to submit proof of completion of their health professional degree (see "[Required Credentials for Eligible Discipline](#)" section).
4. **Loan Information Verification.** Applicants will be required to provide two types of documentation for each loan that is being submitted for consideration: (a) an account statement; and (b) a disbursement report.
 - a. **Account Statement.** This document is used to provide current information on their eligible loans. Often borrowers receive monthly statements indicating the status of their loan balance. This document should:
 - i. be on official letterhead or other clear verification that it comes from the lender/holder;
 - ii. include the name of the borrower (i.e., the STAR LRP applicant);
 - iii. contain the account number;
 - iv. include the date of the statement (cannot be more than 30 days from the date of LRP application submission);
 - v. include the current outstanding balance (principal and interest) or the current payoff balance; and
 - vi. include the current interest rate.
 - b. **Disbursement Report.** This report is used to verify the originating loan information and should:
 - i. be on official letterhead or other clear verification that it comes from the lender/holder;
 - ii. include the name of the borrower;
 - iii. contain the account number;
 - iv. include the type of loan;
 - v. include the original loan date (must be prior to the date of the STAR LRP application submission);
 - vi. include the original loan amount; and
 - vii. include the purpose of the loan.

NOTE: For all federal loans, the [Student Aid Summary Report](#) is used to verify the originating loan information. The applicant will need to have or [create an FSAID](#) – a Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID) – to log in to their secured area. If the applicant has multiple federal loans, they will only need to access one Student Aid Report since the report will contain information on all their federal loans.

For all other loans, the disbursement report can be satisfied through various types of documents including a promissory note, a disclosure statement, and letters directly from the lender containing the required information (as indicated in (b) above). The applicant may be able to obtain this

disbursement information on their lender's website; however, all documentation must be on official letterhead from the lender.

Additional Supplemental Documentation (if applicable)

The following additional documents will be required for submission if the applicant's responses on the online application indicate that they are relevant. Only applicants who have documents listed on the "Supporting Documents" page of their online application should submit them. These documents will be added to their Supporting Documents list once the online application has been submitted.

1. **DATA 2000 Waiver.** A waiver provided under the Control Substance Act (CSA), 21 U.S.C. § 823(g)(2), as amended by the Drug Addiction Treatment Facility Act of 2000 (DATA 2000), and the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA), that permits Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists and Certified Nurse Midwives who meet certain qualifications to treat Opioid Use Disorder with schedule III, IV, and V narcotic medications, including buprenorphine, or combinations of such medications, that are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in treatment settings other than opioid treatment programs (OTPs).
2. **Substance Use Disorder Certification, License or Registration.** A SUD counselor's license or certification must meet the national standard recognized by the NBCC; NAADAC; or IC&RC.
3. **Verification of Existing Service Obligation.** If the applicant has an existing service obligation, they must submit verification from the entity to which the obligation is owed that the existing service obligation will be completed prior to July 22, 2021.
4. **Proof of Name Change.** Applicants will be required to provide legal documents (marriage license or divorce decree) if the name on the proof of citizenship document is different from the name in the application.

Application Review and Approval Process

Applicants receive a receipt of submission pop-up window immediately upon submitting the online application. Applicants are able to view the overall status of their application, as well as a copy (PDF) of their submitted application, which includes a list of uploaded supporting documents, and a copy (PDF) of their completed EVFs by logging into the application account that was set up when the applicant registered to apply. **It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the entirety of the application and required supporting documents (including EVFs) and applicable supplemental documents are accurately submitted.**

Once the online application has been submitted, applicants will have an opportunity to make edits to their online application, including the ability to upload new documents, cancel and reinstate employment verifications, change answers to questions and loan data. The application must be resubmitted after any edits or changes. Final edits must be made and the application resubmitted before the close of the application cycle (July 22, 2021).

Each time the application is reopened for editing, or to check specific elements of the application, the applicant must: (1) complete the “Certify and Submit” section, and (2) click the “Submit” button to resubmit their application, or the application will not be submitted. HRSA advises that providers submit their complete applications as early in the open application period as possible. Applicants who wait until the end of the application cycle risk submitting incomplete or ineligible applications if errors are found later during the open application cycle. The “edit” option is available in the applicant’s account on the “Submitted” page, until the close of the application cycle. The ability to edit and resubmit an application will be disabled after the application deadline. Applications with changes or edits not resubmitted by this deadline will not be considered for an award. **No exceptions will be made in cases where an applicant fails to resubmit an edited application.**

Applicants may withdraw their application at any time prior to the contract being countersigned by the Secretary of HHS or their designee. To withdraw, applicants must contact BHW at <https://www.hrsa.gov/about/contact/bhwhelp.aspx>, and state their intent to withdraw the application. BHW will reach out to the applicant within five business days of receipt of the request to confirm the applicant’s intent to withdraw their application. After the applicant’s confirms the request, BHW will remove the application from consideration for a STAR LRP award.

HRSA will not begin to review applications for funding until the application deadline (July 22, 2021) has passed. See the [“Application Ranking Factors”](#) section for information on the application review process.

All participants must notify HRSA of changes in personal information. Applicants and participants must provide HRSA with notification of any changes to their contact information (e.g., name change, email, mailing address, or telephone number) prior to the change occurring, if possible, or immediately after the change occurs. Applicants can manage their contact information through their online application account on the “Account Settings” page. Once an applicant becomes a participant, they will be provided with information for logging into the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

HRSA Communication Methods

The STAR LRP frequently corresponds with applicants by email. It is important that the applicant check their email during the application process for correspondence from the STAR LRP office and **make certain to disable “spam” blockers (or check the spam folder)**. The STAR LRP will provide email updates as applicable; however, it is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure the contact information that HRSA has on file is correct. If updates are necessary, applicants can make changes prior to the close of the application cycle by logging into their application account. When submitted applications are opened for editing during the open application cycle, applicants must complete ALL steps to resubmit their application prior to the close of the application cycle. Applications that remain in the “In Progress” state (not submitted) after the close of the application cycle are not eligible for review or award.

CONFIRMATION OF INTEREST

Award finalists are notified by email to log into their application account to confirm their continued interest in receiving an award, and to confirm that the loan and employment information provided to HRSA in their STAR LRP application remains valid. Applicants are also asked to confirm that they have read and understand the LRP contract they will be asked to electronically sign if they accept an award. In addition, applicants are asked to provide their direct deposit banking information for award funds in the event they receive a STAR LRP contract.

Note: The COI is not a guarantee that the individual will receive an award, as awards are subject to the availability of funds. All participants will receive final notification of an award, including the service obligation dates, no later than September 30, 2021.

To confirm interest in receiving a STAR LRP award, an applicant must respond by the deadline provided with the COI email and verify that:

- They are currently employed by (i.e., are already working at) the STAR LRP-approved facility (s) they selected when they submitted their application. Applicants who are not employed at the STAR LRP-approved facility(s) verified by HRSA, must check “NO” where asked.
- They will meet the full-time service requirements, as outlined in this Guidance, throughout the period of obligated service.
- The loans approved by HRSA for repayment are correct.

All finalists must read and electronically sign the contract document. The electronic signature has the effect of a handwritten signature, and verifies that all of the information in the COI is accurate. Once countersigned by the Secretary of HHS or their designee, the contract obligates the participant to a STAR LRP award service obligation. Applicants who verify inaccurate information on the COI may not receive service credit and/or be in a breach of contract. If an applicant does not complete the COI process by the deadline, their application may be withdrawn from consideration.

If an individual selected for an award decides not to accept the award **prior to signing the contract**, they may decline the award by selecting the “decline” option on the COI document. This process is without penalty and permits the award to be offered to an alternate applicant. Once an applicant declines the offer of award, there will not be any opportunities to reclaim the award.

If an individual selected for an award decides not to accept it **after signing the contract**, the individual should notify HRSA immediately through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) that they no longer want the award.

- **If the Secretary’s designee has not yet countersigned the contract**, the individual will not incur a service obligation or any penalty for withdrawing.
- **If the Secretary’s designee has signed the contract**, the individual can terminate the contract at any time if the individual who has been awarded such contract has not received funds due under the contract. Once the individual has received funds, the contract cannot be terminated.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS

Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) – The bureau within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that administers the Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program (STAR LRP).

Provider's Clinical Support System for Medication-Assisted Treatment (PCSS-MAT) – PCSS-MAT is a national training and clinical mentoring project developed in response to the prescription opioid misuse epidemic and the availability of pharmacotherapies to treat opioid use disorder. The free MAT training is a prerequisite for obtaining a DATA 2000 Waiver.

PCSS-MAT trains health professionals to provide effective, evidence-based MAT to patients with opioid use disorder in primary care, psychiatric care, substance use disorder treatment, and pain management settings.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – An agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, whose primary aim is to improve the behavioral health of the nation while reducing the impact of mental illness and substance abuse in communities.

Health Workforce Connector (HWC) – A searchable database of open job opportunities and information on STAR LRP-approved facilities.

Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) Customer Service Portal – Allows STAR LRP awardees and participants to communicate with HRSA staff, make service requests (e.g., suspensions, transfers, authorized break from service, etc.), and access the six-month In-Service Verification forms.

Need Help?

Any individual with questions about the STAR LRP program may contact the Customer Care Center Monday through Friday (except federal holidays) from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

- 1-800-221-9393
- TTY: 1-877-897-9910

DEFINITIONS

Behavioral Health-Related Paraprofessional – An individual who is not a mental or behavioral health service professional, but who works at the first stage of contact with individuals and families who are seeking mental or behavioral health services, including substance abuse prevention and treatment services. This job classification includes occupations such as mental health worker, health educator, peer support counselor, peer support specialist, community health worker, outreach worker, social services aide, substance abuse/addictions worker, youth worker, promotor(a), recovery manager, recovery mentor, recovery support specialist, and recovery coach/guide.

Breach of Service Obligation – Failure, for any reason, to begin or complete a service obligation for which the participant has been paid.

Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) – The bureau within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that administers the Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program (STAR LRP), National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and Nurse Corps Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs, the Faculty Loan Repayment Program (FLRP), Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program (NHHSP), and grants for the State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP). STAR LRP applicants must have eligible post-secondary or higher educational loans. Eligible loans are:

1. Any loan for education or training for a substance use disorder treatment employment.
2. Any loan under part E of subchapter VI of the Public Health Service Act (relating to nursing student loans).
3. Any Federal Direct Stafford Loan, Federal Direct PLUS Loan, Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, or Federal Direct Consolidation Loan (as such terms are used in section 455 of the Higher Education Act of 1965).
4. Any Federal Perkins Loan under part E of title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Covered Employment - For purposes of STAR LRP, covered employment will begin on the effective date of the STAR LRP contract.

DATA 2000 Waiver – A waiver obtained under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), 21 U.S.C. § 823(g)(2), as amended by the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 (DATA 2000), and the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016, that permits physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, clinical nurse specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists and certified nurse midwives who meet certain qualifications to treat opioid use disorder with Schedule III, IV, and V narcotic medications, including buprenorphine, or combinations of such medications, that are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in treatment settings other than opioid treatment programs (OTPs).

Family and Family Member – As used in the Guidance and for the purposes of HRSA “family member” includes spouses, as well as unmarried partners (both same sex and opposite sex) living in the same household.

Federal Judgment Lien – A lien that is placed against an individual’s home or property when a court-ordered judgment is entered against the individual for an unpaid federal debt (e.g., a federal student loan or federally insured home mortgage). Note that an IRS tax lien that is not created pursuant to a court-ordered judgment is not a federal judgment lien.

Fiscal Year (FY) – Defined as October 1 through September 30.

Full-Time Service – For all disciplines except psychology doctoral interns, full-time service means working a minimum of 40 hours per week providing direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder, for a minimum of 45 weeks per service year, in a

STAR LRP-approved facility. For a more detailed explanation of the full-time service requirement, see the “[Service Obligation Requirements](#)” section. For psychology doctoral interns, full-time employment is defined as the active participation in a full time internship at a STAR LRP approved facility. Upon completion of the internship, psychology doctoral interns must be employed as psychologists and work a minimum of 40 hours per week providing direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder, for a minimum of 45 weeks per service year, at a STAR LRP-approved facility.

Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) – A geographic area, population group, public or nonprofit private medical facility or other public facility determined by the Secretary of HHS to have a shortage of primary care, dental or mental health care professionals based on criteria defined in statute or regulation. Information considered when designating a mental health HPSA includes health provider to population ratios, rates of poverty, alcohol abuse prevalence, substance abuse prevalence and access to available primary health services. HPSAs are designated by the Shortage Designation Branch within HRSA’s Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW), pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 254e (Section 332 of the PHS Act) and implementing regulations (42 C.F.R., Part 5).

Health Workforce Connector – The [Health Workforce Connector](#) is a searchable database of open job opportunities and information on STAR LRP-approved facilities as well as sites approved for other HRSA loan repayment and scholarship programs.

Holder – The commercial or government institution that currently holds the promissory note for the eligible educational loan (e.g., Sallie Mae, PHEAA, etc.).

Lender – The commercial or government institution that initially made the eligible loan (e.g., Department of Education).

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) – The use of FDA-approved medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a “whole-patient” approach to the treatment of substance use disorders.

Drug Overdose Mortality Rate - Number of deaths due to drug poisoning per 100,000 population.

Postgraduate Training – Refers to additional training that a health professions student may participate in after they graduate from a health professions education program (e.g., internships, residencies, chief residency, and fellowships).

STAR LRP-Approved Facility – a substance use disorder treatment program, private physician practice, hospital or health system-affiliated inpatient treatment center or outpatient clinic (including an academic medical center-affiliated treatment program), correctional facility or program, youth detention center or program, inpatient psychiatric facility, crisis stabilization unit, community health center, community mental health or other specialty community behavioral health center, recovery center, school, community-based organization, telehealth platform, migrant health center, health program or facility operated by an Indian tribe or tribal organization, or Federal medical facility that is

located in either a county (or a municipality, if not contained within any county) where the mean drug overdose death rate per 100,000 people over the past three years for which official data is available from the State, is higher than the most recent available national average overdose death rate per 100,000 people, as reported by the CDC, or in a mental health HPSA. For a list of STAR LRP-eligible facility types, please visit <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/funding/star-lrp-facility-types.pdf>

Spouse and Marriage – As used in this Guidance and for the purposes of the STAR LRP, “spouse” includes same-sex married couples, as well as opposite-sex married couples. In accordance with the U.S. Supreme Court decisions in United States v. Windsor and in Obergefell v. Hodges, the Department of Health and Human Services will treat as valid marriages of same-sex couples. The term “spouse” does not include individuals in registered domestic partnerships, civil unions, or similar formal relationships recognized under state law as something other than a marriage.

State – As used in this Guidance, state includes the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Territory of American Samoa, Territory of Guam, Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Federated States of Micronesia.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) – Involves the overuse of, or dependence on, one or more substances leading to a clinically significant impairment whose effects are detrimental to the individual's physical and mental health, or the welfare of others.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Professional and Paraprofessional – As used in this Guidance and for the purposes of the STAR LRP, SUD Professionals include: Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Certified Nurse Midwives, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Psychiatric Nurse Specialists, Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Professional Counselors, SUD counselors, Clinical Pharmacists, Registered Nurses, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, Licensed Occupational Therapists, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Clinical Nurse Specialists. Paraprofessionals include: Certified Nursing Assistants, Certified Medical Assistants, Psychology Doctoral Interns and Behavioral Health Paraprofessionals.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment – As used in this Guidance and for purposes of the STAR LRP, SUD refers to SUD-related care that is delivered based on a standardized assessment of SUD treatment needs.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Employment – Means full-time employment (including a fellowship):

- (A) Where the primary intent and function of the position is the direct treatment or recovery support of patients with or in recovery from a substance use disorder, including master’s level social workers, psychologists, counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychiatric mental health practitioners, occupational therapists, psychology doctoral interns, and behavioral health paraprofessionals and physicians, physician assistants, and nurses, who are licensed or certified in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws; and

- (B) Which is located at a SUD treatment program, private physician practice, hospital or health system-affiliated inpatient treatment center or outpatient clinic (including an academic medical center-affiliated treatment program), correctional facility or program, youth detention center or program, inpatient psychiatric facility, crisis stabilization unit, community health center, community mental health or other specialty community behavioral health center, recovery center, school, community-based organization, telehealth platform, migrant health center, health program or facility operated by an Indian tribe or tribal organization, or federal medical facility

Substantial gainful employment - The term “substantial gainful employment” is intended to mean a level of employment that can be reasonably expected to generate income that would allow the participant to pay the liquidated damages. For example, participants that are medically unable to engage in a clinical practice for which they received the award, but can still utilize their education and experience to generate a substantial income that would permit them to make monthly payments toward their liquidated damages.

Telemedicine/Telehealth – The practice of medicine with regard to the STAR LRP, which is in accordance with applicable federal and state laws by a practitioner (other than a pharmacist) who is at a location remote from the patient; and is communicating with the patient, or health care professional who is treating the patient, using interactive telecommunications system, defined as multimedia communications equipment that includes, at a minimum, audio and video equipment permitting two-way, real time interactive communication between the patient and the STAR LRP participant. While:

- (A) The patient is being treated by, and physically located in, a DEA-registered hospital or clinic; and by a practitioner:

- who is acting in the usual course of professional practice;
- who is acting in accordance with applicable state law; and
- who is registered with the DEA state in which the patient is located.

-OR-

- (B) The patient is being treated by, and in the physical presence of, a DEA-registered practitioner

- who is acting in the usual course of professional practice;
- who is acting in accordance with applicable state law; and
- Who is registered with DEA in the state in which the patient is located.

Importantly, remote practitioners engaged in the practice of telemedicine must be registered with the DEA in the state where they are physically located and in every state where their patient(s) is (are) physically located. All records for prescribing of an FDA approved narcotic for the SUD treatment of opioid addiction need to be kept in accordance with federal regulations.

Unencumbered License – A license that is not revoked, suspended, or made probationary or conditional by the state licensing authority as the result of disciplinary action.