

This notice is being published early to coincide with the recruitment activity of the IHS which competes with other Government and private health management organizations to employ qualified health professionals. Funds are required to be expended by September 30 of the fiscal year. This program is authorized by Section 108 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act as amended, 25 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.* The IHS invites potential applicants to request an application for participation in the Loan Repayment Program.

DATES: Applications for the FY 1996 Loan Repayment Program will be accepted and evaluated monthly beginning 30 days after publication of this notice and will continue each month thereafter until all funds are exhausted. Subsequent monthly deadline dates are scheduled for Friday of the second full week of each month. Notice of awards will be mailed on the last working day of each month.

Applicants selected for participation in the FY 1996 program cycle will be expected to begin their service period no later than September 30, 1996.

Applications shall be considered as meeting the deadline if they are either:

1. Received on or before the deadline date; or
2. Sent on or before the deadline date. (Applicants should request a legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark or obtain a legibly dated receipt from a commercial carrier or the U.S. Postal Service. Private metered postmarks shall *not* be acceptable as proof of timely mailing.)

Applications received after the monthly closing date will be held for consideration in the next monthly funding cycle. Applicants who do not receive funding by September 30, 1996, will be notified in writing.

FORM TO BE USED FOR APPLICATION:

Applications will be accepted only if they are submitted on the form entitled "Application for the Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Program," identified with the Office of Management and Budget approval number of OMB #0917-0014 (expires 2/28/96).

ADDRESSES: Application materials may be obtained by calling or writing to the address below. In addition, completed applications should be returned to: IHS Loan Repayment Program, 12300 Twinbrook Parkway—Suite 100, Rockville, Maryland 20852, PH: 301/443-3396 (between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. (EST) Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Please address inquiries to Mr. Charles Yepa, LRP Section Chief, IHS Loan Repayment Program, Twinbrook Metro Plaza—Suite 100, 12300 Twinbrook Parkway, Rockville, Maryland 20852, PH: 301/443-3396 (between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. (EST) Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 108 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act as amended by Public Law 100-713 and 102-573, authorizes the IHS Loan Repayment Program and provides in pertinent part as follows:

The Secretary, acting through the Service, shall establish a program to be known as the Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Program (hereinafter referred to as the "Loan Repayment Program") in order to assure an adequate supply of trained health professionals necessary to maintain accreditation of, and provide health care services to Indians through, Indian health programs

"Health Profession" means family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, geriatric medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, podiatric medicine, nursing, public health nursing, dentistry, psychiatry, osteopathy, optometry, pharmacy, psychology, public health, social work, marriage and family therapy, chiropractic medicine, environmental health and engineering and allied health professions.

Osteopathic physicians (D.O.) may be funded regardless of specialty, provided that the IHS has a need for that specialty. Allopathic physicians (M.D.) may be funded only if they are board certified/eligible in family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, geriatric medicine, obstetrics and gynecology and psychiatry.

For the purpose of this program, the term "Indian health program" is defined in Section 108(a)(2)(A), as follows:

* * * any health program or facility funded, in whole or in part, by the IHS for the benefit of American Indians and Alaska Natives and administered:

- a. Directly by the service; or
- b. By any Indian tribe or tribal or Indian organization pursuant to a contract under:
 - (1) The Indian Self-Determination Act; or
 - (2) Section 23 of the Act of April 30, 1908, (25 U.S.C. 47), popularly known as the Buy Indian Act; or
 - (3) By an urban Indian organization pursuant to Title V of this act.

Applicants may sign contractual agreements with the Secretary for 2 years. The IHS will repay all or a portion of the applicant's health professions educational loans (undergraduate and graduate) for tuition expenses and reasonable educational and living expenses in amounts up to \$30,000 per year for each year of contracted service to be made in annual

payments to the participant for the purpose of repaying his/her outstanding health professions educational loans. Repayment of health professions educational loans will be made to the participant within 120 days after the participant's entry on duty has been confirmed by the IHS. The Secretary must approve the contract before the disbursement of loan repayments can be made to the participant.

Participants will be required to fulfill their contract service agreements through full-time clinical practice at an Indian health program site determined by the Secretary. Loan repayment sites are characterized by physical, cultural, and professional isolation, and have histories of frequent staff turnover. All Indian health program sites are annually prioritized by discipline, based on need or vacancy by the Agency.

All health professionals will receive up to \$30,000 per year, regardless of their length of contract. Where payments under the Loan Repayment Program result in an increase in Federal income tax liability, the IHS will pay up to 31 percent of the participant's total loan repayments to the Internal Revenue Service on the participant's behalf for all or part of the increased tax liability of the participant.

Pursuant to Section 108(b), to be eligible to participate in the Loan Repayment Program an individual must:

- (1) A. be enrolled:
 - (i) In a course of study or program in an accredited institution, as determined by the Secretary, within any state and be scheduled to complete such course of study in the same year such individual applies to participate in the Loan Repayment Program. (The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau); or
 - (ii) In an approved graduate training program in a health profession; or
- B. have a degree in a health profession and a license to practice; AND
- (2) A. be eligible for, or hold an appointment as a Commissioned Officer in the Regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service, or
 - B. be eligible for selection for civilian service in the Regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service; or
 - C. meet the professional standards for civil service employment in the IHS; or
 - D. be employed in an Indian health program without service obligation; AND