NCSP Frequently Asked Questions

Is this the same program as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Clinical Scholars Program?

No. Although the RWJF provided generous support to the Clinical Scholars program for about 40 years, the Foundation ended support for their training programs in their current form. Previously, the place-based Clinical Scholars program prepared physicians for health services and health policy research. A separate national program prepared nurse faculty leaders. This new program includes both nurses and physicians as trainees.

How is the NCSP different from the legacy RWJF Clinical Scholars Program?

The training sites that comprise the NCSP partner with their local institutions and community partners to build upon the strong foundation of the RWJF's prior program. These partnerships have enabled the new National Clinician Scholars Program to move forward on an exciting new path. There is a strong commitment to interprofessional training, with post- doctoral nurses training as Scholars alongside the physicians, and nursing and medical faculty are closely integrated into all aspects of the program. Additionally, the program builds upon its commitment to engaged research by integrating the Scholars' interests with partner organizations and faculty within each site.

Why is this a "national" program? How are the sites coordinating their efforts?

- All sites share a common legacy and vision: to train and inspire agents of change;
- All sites include nurses and physicians in interdisciplinary efforts;
- Strong collaboration across sites not only through recruitment planning and a national meeting, but also sharing of critical curricular components;
- Committed network of advisors, as well as alumni from former RWJF Clinical Scholars program;
- Rigorous assessment and oversight of quality through internal and external evaluation.

How is the NCSP similar to the legacy RWJF Clinical Scholars Program?

- The NCSP retains many of the strengths of the legacy program. The sites have a strong commitment to innovation in teaching and scholarship, engaging partners in all phases of the research and educational process, and creating a culture where Scholars are inspired to work as change agents from within the system, with the goal of improving health of individuals, communities, and populations.
- National Clinician Scholars will receive the strong mentorship and robust training in research methods, policy, leadership, and communication skills that were hallmarks of the legacy Clinical Scholars program.

How long is the program, and when would I start?

The program is two years long, and new classes begin each July.

How will Scholars spend their time during the program?

The specific schedule will vary both across Scholars (according to their interests) and across the Program sites. Generally, the first year is heavier on didactics, as Scholars are engaged in coursework, identifying partners for their research projects, and initiating their Scholarly work. Scholars have more time in year two to devote to research. Scholars devote no more than 20% of their time to clinical activities during each year. Clinical activities may depend upon their project and interest, e.g. education, consultation, direct patient care.

Can I earn a master's degree?

Yes, you can earn a master's degree in an affiliated program at each site. Participation varies across sites: at some sites, scholar participation in an affiliated master's program is a mandatory component of the NCSP; at others, it is optional. Please inquire at each location for specifics in this regard.

Who is eligible to apply?

Physicians who will have completed their clinical training and nurses who have completed their doctoral degree are eligible to apply. The clinical training for physicians and the doctoral degree for nurses should have been completed within the past 5 years prior to the application process. Surgeons are the single exception to the requirement; due to the structure of the "research years" in the middle of many surgical residencies, surgical residents who will be PGY-3 or higher are eligible to enroll in the program. Funding for people who are neither United States citizens nor permanent residents can be difficult. If you are neither, please contact a program director at the site(s) to which you are interested in applying. Please note that the NCSP cannot sponsor work visas.

How many sites should I apply to?

There is no minimum or maximum number of sites to which you can apply. Some applicants have personal reasons that would only allow them to enter the program at one site. This is perfectly understandable, and in no way disadvantages your application. If you are only able to attend a single site, then only apply to that site. If you can envision yourself at a variety of sites, then apply to those that interest you.

When do I find out if I am invited to interview at an NCSP site?

Program sites will notify applicants whether they are offered an interview in August. All interviews will be conducted virtually.

How many sites may I interview at?

Applicants who are offered multiple interviews may interview at up to four sites. Your decision about how many interview offers to accept will not be used as a proxy to gauge your commitment and

interest in the program. On the contrary, we know that applicants have myriad factors to consider when choosing where to interview.

In addition, we have found that interviewing at more than four program sites can make scheduling difficult for applicants, without necessarily increasing the chances of being accepted into the program overall.

Will in-person interviews or site-hosted on-campus visits be held by the sites?

No in-person interviews or site-hosted on-campus visits will be held at any of the NCSP sites.

May applicants defer admission to NCSP?

The NCSP does not allow deferral of entry. Under extraordinary circumstances, each local site may make rare exceptions to this policy.

Do NCSP Scholars receive a stipend?

All NCSP Scholars receive an annual stipend. The table below lists the expected minimum stipend amounts for university-appointed Scholars across the six NCSP sites for academic year 2026-2027 (AY26-27). The stipends at the UCLA and UCSF sites are higher due to unique local conditions and institutional requirements at each site. Please reach out if you have any questions.

NCSP Expected Yearly Minimum Compensation AY26-27 Duke University University of Michigan University of Pennsylvania Yale University	
Nurse/Physician	$87,000
NCSP Expected Yearly Minimum Compensation AY26-27 University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)	
Nurse/Physician	$99,000
NCSP Expected Yearly Minimum Compensation AY26-27* University of California San Francisco (UCSF) * UCSF salaries for AY26-27 are currently under negotiation. The amounts below reflect AY25-26 salaries (including housing allowance).	
Nurse	$106,127
Physician PGY4	$106,127
Physician PGY5	$109,737
Physician PGY6	$113,149

Will I be eligible for the NIH Loan Repayment Program?

The NIH Loan Repayment Program (LRP) provides a competitive process for people pursuing careers in

research to apply for partial repayment of student loan debt. Most federal employees are ineligible to apply. In addition, at many NCSP sites, some fellowship spots are funded through National Research Service Award (NRSA) grants, such as T32 training grants that the university has received. Scholars funded through these grants are also ineligible to apply while on the grant, although there are possible deferral workarounds. In all of these cases, scholars pursuing careers in research are eligible to apply to LRP following completion of NCSP fellowship provided they otherwise meet eligibility requirements. Note that many other types of research fellowships are funded under the same or similar mechanisms, and thus are subject to the same restrictions. See https://www.lrp.nih.gov/ for more information

How are positions funded, and do they incur any obligations?

Every site has slightly different ways of funding positions. Many help fund Scholar salaries through institutional research training grants from NIH or AHRQ, known as T32 grants, which are commonly used to support research fellowships. These grants have a provision whereby if fellows leave the program early to take a job that does not involve some form of health- related research or teaching they may be asked to pay back some of the salary. This provision does not apply for Scholars completing two years of training or who leave early for jobs that includes some type of research or teaching activities, which are typically defined quite broadly. See https://researchtraining.nih.gov/training/payback for more information.

What if I am interested in speaking with an NCSP faulty member before applying?

If you are interested in applying, meet our eligibility requirements, and would like to speak with an NCSP faculty member to learn more, please fill out this form. You will be contacted within ten business days to schedule a call.