

Harvard Medical School Presidential Scholars Program Public Service Initiative Program Description

The Harvard Medical School Financial Aid Office is pleased to continue a debt-relief scholarship program targeted to graduating HMS students who have an intention of pursuing careers in public service. The program, called the HMS Public Service Initiative, has been created as part of the graduate/professional Presidential Scholars financial aid initiative established by former President Lawrence H. Summers to make a Harvard education more accessible and affordable for talented students who wish to pursue careers in public service. The HMS Public Service Initiative is designed to relieve the loan obligation of selected graduating students of Harvard Medical School who meet the criteria listed below.

Eligibility for this program will include the following:

- demonstrated career path in public service/policy*
- practice and/or research that promotes public health or health policy
- commitment to underserved communities (local or international)
- international medicine (in resource poor settings)
- demonstrated commitment to medical education that promotes public service

Note: All students meeting the criteria of public service above with educational debt in excess of \$50,000 are encouraged to apply. Priority will be given to students who have accumulated educational debt in excess of \$100,000.

** Priority for funding will be provided to students who meet the following criteria:*

- *entrance into a primary care field/concentration: family medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine*
- *demonstrated commitment to community service*
- *demonstrated commitment to medical education that promotes community/public service*
- *substantial commitment to clinical care in future career goals*

** Applicants should explain their definition of public service in the Statement of Purpose, detailing how their past activities and future plans meet this definition of public service.*

HMS students will apply to this program in their graduating year. The application process includes a one-page Statement of Purpose, providing citations of the student's prior commitment to public service, an explanation regarding how the student's intended residency program further enhances this pursuit, and a detailed description of the student's intended career path in public service. Three letters of recommendation, one being the academic Dean's Letter and two one page-letters being from people knowledgeable about the student's public service work, are required. An official HMS transcript and the student's Curriculum Vitae are also required.

Selection of recipients will be based upon a combination of factors, including the students' letters of recommendation and demonstrated commitment to public service. Financial need is a significant factor in the selection process. Recipients are determined once confirmation is received regarding a student's match in a residency program.

Award amounts will be based upon a percentage of a recipient's total HMS educational debt. Amounts will depend upon number of recipients selected.

A condition of this award will include an update to the HMS Financial Aid Office upon completion of one's residency program detailing the intended career path of the recipient and describing how the Presidential Scholars Public Service Initiative impacted the recipient's pursuit of that career path.

**Harvard Medical School
Presidential Scholars Program
2025-2026 Public Service Initiative**

Eligibility Requirements:

- Intention to Pursue Public Service*
- Demonstrated Commitment To/Track Record in Public Service
- Financial Need (*Minimum educational debt of \$50,000; priority will be given to students with educational debt in excess of \$100,000*)
- Academic Excellence
- 2026 HMS Graduate

Statement of Purpose (one-page limit):

Please define what public service means to you. Include examples of activities in which you have engaged that show your commitment to this definition. Indicate how your residency program will prepare you for continued pursuit of public service. Please describe how your career plans demonstrate a commitment to public service.

Statement of Purpose requirement: 12 point font with 1 inch margins will only be accepted.

Letters of Recommendation:

Three letters of recommendation are required. Your academic letter should be your official Dean's Letter (***send request to the HMS Registrar's Office; do not request from your Society***). Two remaining letters should be **no more than one page**, focus on your public service activities and be from people who have detailed knowledge of your commitment to public service. These letters should address how committed you are to a career in public service, elaborating on your relative experience, creativity, initiative and leadership skills. Recommenders should have detailed knowledge of your future career plans.

Caution: if you are planning to request a recommendation letter from your Society advisor, be sure this person has direct and extensive knowledge of your commitment to public service.

Curriculum Vitae:

Please submit Curriculum Vitae with your application. This document should indicate your prior Public Service activities. Please provide a timeline for these activities (start/end period, # of hours pursuing activity per week or month, etc.). *CV's without a clear understanding of your time commitments to activities will weaken your application.*

HMS Transcript:

Please submit an official HMS transcript with your application.

Application Deadline: April 3rd

Forward completed application materials to: financial_aid@hms.harvard

2025-2026 HMS Loan Forgiveness Application

Please read the eligibility requirements for the loan forgiveness program(s) to which you are applying. If you are applying to more than one program, please note that only one set of application materials will be accepted:

- One statement of purpose referencing your interest in both public service and primary care
- Three letters of recommendation (one being the Dean's Letter)
- One curriculum vitae (indicating your time commitment to public service/primary care)
- One HMS transcript.

I am applying for (check all that apply):

Presidential Scholars Public Service Initiative

Primary Care Loan Forgiveness Program

First name

Last name

Street address

Street address line 2

City

State

Zip code

Phone number

Email

Society

Residency Site

Field of Medicine

Do you plan to pursue a specialty during/after residency:

If yes, in what field:

Yes

No

Should I be awarded funding from either the HMS Public Service Initiative or the Primary Care Loan Forgiveness Program, I authorize the HMS Financial Aid Office to publicize my name as a recipient of this/these award(s). I understand that no personal financial information will be released in this announcement.

Signature

Date