

# Scholars for a Healthy Oregon Initiative (SHOI) FAQs

## What Practice sites are eligible for SHOI?

Sites in **urban** areas (**primary care only**):

- Federally Qualified Health Centers ([FQHCs](#))
- County and state correctional facilities
- Community Mental Health Clinics
- State Mental Hospital – Salem
- A Non-profit facility, with a [HPSA](#) for your profession, seeing a minimum of 50% Medicaid patients
- Other primary care facilities as identified by the Oregon Office of Rural Health with a HPSA score for your profession

Sites in **rural** areas (**primary care and all other specialties**):

- Federally Qualified Health Centers ([FQHCs](#))
- Sites in [rural areas](#) in Oregon, with a [HPSA](#) for your profession, seeing the same percentage of Medicaid and Medicare patients that exist in the county in which the clinic is located
- County and State correctional facilities
- Community Mental Health Clinics
- State Mental Hospital- Junction City
- Critical Access Hospitals ([CAH](#)) and other [rural hospitals](#)
- Certified Rural Health Clinics ([RHC](#))
- Veterans Affairs Facilities
- Tribal Clinics

**You must receive written confirmation from the Office of Rural health that a practice site qualifies for SHOI before signing an employment contract with the practice site.**

## What is considered primary care for the SHOI program?

**Physicians:** Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, OB/GYN, Geriatrics

**Physician Assistants:** Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, OB/GYN, Geriatrics

**Dentists:** General Dentistry

**Nurse Practitioners:** Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, OB/GYN, Nurse Midwives, Adult Gerontology Acute Nurse Practitioner, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

### **What about other specialties or urgent/same day care?**

Other specialties (those not listed above) and urgent/same day care are not considered primary care for the SHOI program. However, SHOI scholars can choose to practice other specialties OR primary care in [rural areas](#) in Oregon.

### **Which Oregon communities are considered rural?**

The Oregon Office of Rural Health defines rural as all geographic areas in Oregon that are 10 or more miles from a population centroid of 40,000 people or more. You can download a list of Oregon zip codes and their Oregon Office of Rural Health Urban/Rural designation [here](#).

### **Can I work in an inpatient setting?**

Inpatient work is not allowed while you are under your SHOI obligation, no matter the practice site's location or qualification status.

### **Can I work part-time?**

No, you must work full time. Full time is defined as minimum of 32 hours per week of clinical practice for a total of 45 weeks in a 52 week period for the entire length of your SHOI commitment. Patient charting is a component of offering direct patient care, but most other activities are not.

### **Can I practice in a specialty?**

You may practice in a specialty at a SHOI approved practice site in a rural community. If you intend to work in an urban community, it must be in a primary care only. Inpatient work is not allowed while you are under your SHOI obligation, no matter the practice site's location or qualification status.

### **I am working while I am in school. Can these work hours count towards my SHOI service obligation?**

Only after completing your SHOI funded program may your employment hours count towards your SHOI service obligation. In the case of an M.D., this includes completion of residency.

### **Can I accept other loan repayment funding during my service obligation?**

No, you cannot accept **any** other loan repayment funding during your SHOI obligation. This includes, but is not limited to, funds from the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), NURSE Corps, Oregon Provider Incentive Program Loan Repayment (PILP), and the Oregon Partnership State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP). Once you've completed your SHOI service obligation you may accept any loan repayment funds from another program. The only exception is loan repayment directly from your site that has no service commitment attached. You must confirm with the Oregon Office of Rural Health before accepting any loan repayment funds from your employer.

## **Can my employer offer me other incentive funds during my SHOI service obligation?**

Signing bonus and relocation funds that are tied to a service obligation are not allowed. For example, funds that must be paid back in full if a provider leaves before a certain date, are considered to be tied to a service obligation. However, prorated signing bonuses and/or relocation funds are allowable. Contact the Oregon Office of Rural Health before signing an employment contract that contains signing bonuses or relocation funds to ensure that these funds do not conflict with your SHOI obligation.

## **What if I must transfer practice sites during my SHOI obligation?**

All requests to transfer practice sites must be preapproved through the Oregon Office of Rural Health (ORH). Contact ORH as soon as possible if you are considering transferring practice sites.

## **What if I need to take extended leave from my practice Site during my SHOI obligation?**

The Oregon Office of Rural Health (ORH) will grant extended leave from your practice site for situations that are typically covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA). Please contact ORH as soon as possible if you anticipate taking an extended leave from your practice site.

## **I am unfamiliar with living or working in a rural community. How can I learn more about what it's like to live and work rural?**

There are several ways to connect with a rural community prior to your job search:

- Complete a clinical rotation with the [OHSU Campus for Rural Health](#).
- Ask your program's faculty if you can do clinical experience/rotation in rural communities.
- Connect with regional [AHEC](#) directors to learn about their region and the housing, employment, and cultural opportunities available there.
- Ask the Oregon Office of Rural Health to connect you with other loan repayment participants in rural areas to find out what it's like for them.

## **I'm interested in specialties other than primary care. When do I have to decide which to practice?**

You don't have to decide immediately, but keep in mind that choosing a non-primary care specialty will limit service sites to Oregon Office of Rural Health designated rural communities, and you'll want research if rural sites hire for your specialty. You can ask Oregon Office of Rural Health if you have questions.

## **What can I do to set myself up for success in the SHOI program?**

- Explore opportunities in urban underserved and rural communities to maximize your chances of securing employment at an eligible site for your service commitment.
- Keep in touch with the Oregon Office of Rural health and ask about practice sites that are hiring in communities that interest you.
- Attend Oregon Office of Rural Health presentations and don't hesitate to ask questions about your SHOI obligation.

## **Will the Oregon Office of Rural Health find a job for me at an approved site?**

SHOI participants are responsible for securing their own employment. However, the Oregon Office of Rural Health has relationships with many clinics—both rural and urban underserved. We often work behind the scenes encouraging clinics to post their opportunities, assisting them with marketing, and helping them connect with students and providers.

## **When should I start looking for a job?**

This depends on your profession. Your best bet is to ask your program faculty for their recommendations. If you're still unsure, feel free to contact the Oregon Office of Rural Health.

## **Where can I access job opportunities at SHOI eligible sites?**

Sign up on [www.3RNet.org](http://www.3RNet.org) to receive opportunity notices from eligible SHOI sites. Many Community Health Centers also post their opportunities on the [Oregon Primary Care Association's website](#)

## **What if I'm not interested in any of the jobs available at eligible service sites at the time I'm required to start my SHOI service?**

The Oregon Office of Rural Health will continue to notify you of job opportunities we're aware of, however it is the responsibility of SHOI students to secure employment with an eligible site. Failure to begin service commitment employment with an eligible site within 90 days of completing your program or residency is considered a breach of your SHOI agreement and will result in repayment of all funding plus an additional penalty of 25%. Please review your signed SHOI agreement for repayment terms.

## **Does my site have to accept all types of insurance?**

While practicing at the designated service site, your site must see all patients without regard for their insurance status or ability to pay for services.

## **Can I attend a fellowship after graduation or completion of residency?**

At this time, SHOI does not allow for fellowships or other trainings. You must begin your service obligation no more than 90 days post-graduation (or post-residency case of a an M.D. student)

## **How do I get in touch with the Oregon Office of Rural Health?**

You can call the Oregon Office of Rural Health at 503-494-4450, or you can email [ruralworkforce@ohsu.edu](mailto:ruralworkforce@ohsu.edu).