

Guidelines for Health Center Directors Nominating Employees & Dependents

The Jim and Sue Bernstein Health Center Scholarship program commemorates the late Jim Bernstein, a national rural health pioneer who, for more than 30 years, led North Carolina's efforts as a model of innovation for the community-driven care for low-income, under-served and vulnerable North Carolina residents. The scholarship also honors Sue Bernstein, Jim's wife and partner for 40 years, a former teacher and returning Peace Corps volunteer, who continued to work with school-age and college students as a tutor, mentor, friend and advisor.

The following guidelines have been developed by the Jim Bernstein Health Leadership Committee to provide guidance to health center directors of eligible rural and community health centers when nominating potential scholarship recipients. The Jim and Sue Bernstein Health Center Scholarship program is administered by the Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation, a non-profit based in Cary, NC. All applicants must be residents of North Carolina.

Scholarship Eligibility Guidelines:

1. Center directors are asked to nominate dedicated clinical (e.g., nurses, lab techs, etc.) and non-clinical (e.g., billing clerks, receptionists, etc.) employees of moderate to low-income who intend to advance their education and skills relating to their work at the health center. **Applications are limited to 3 employees from any entity, who have been working at the health center for at least two years as of May 26, 2023.** Awardees must remain employed at the health center after completing their education and training with this scholarship. While not required, the committee suggests that the health center director consider employees who are earning \$50,000 or less. **Preference will be given to individuals majoring in healthcare fields, which can include majors in supportive fields in rural communities.**
2. Family circumstances – Because the scholarship is intended to assist employees who are financially challenged, we recommend that health center directors consider the entire family's circumstances, not just the employee's salary, but also other factors, such as a spouse's job or income.
3. Dependents of employees – Center directors should nominate dependents of moderate to low-income, dedicated employees, who are eligible for college or other post-secondary programs. The scholarship is intended for **dependents of non-physicians. Applications are limited to 3 dependents of employees, from any entity, where the employee has been working at the health center for at least two years as of May, 26, 2023. Preference will be given to individuals majoring in healthcare fields, which can include majors in supportive fields in rural communities.**
4. Student Characteristics – While the award is based on the characteristics of the employee (see above), the dependent applicant shall be of strong moral character, in good academic standing, have demonstrated community service, and have been admitted into an accredited university, college, technical, or trade school. Applicants must accurately and truthfully complete the application for the program and submit requested documents. Upon receiving the award, recipients will be asked to submit regular progress reports via survey.
5. Colleges and other post-secondary programs – Accredited universities, community colleges, technical and trade schools are all acceptable. In some circumstances, accredited distance-learning degree and certificate programs are also acceptable. For these long-distance programs, the committee will be critical of the type of program/study degree, whether or not fully accredited and high tuitions.
6. Eligibility – Students are eligible to receive up to **two** scholarship awards. The committee looks for a minimum 2.50 GPA for applicants applying for a second award. All applicants must live in North Carolina.