

# Rural health workforce incentives scheme

## Frequently Asked Questions for Health Workers

What is the Rural Health Workforce Incentives Scheme? .....	1
What incentives are available in the RHWIS?.....	1
Who is eligible for the RHWIS? .....	3
Is there an application process for the RHWIS? .....	3
Can health workers have multiple incentive packages?.....	3
Can incentive packages be transferred when changing positions? .....	3
Can temporary or contract health workers be eligible for incentives? .....	4
How are incentives processed, paid, and for how long? .....	4
Is there a repayment requirement?.....	4
How is tax impacted by the RHWIS?.....	4
What are some of the considerations working for rural and regional NSW?.....	5
Further questions and enquiries .....	5

### What is the Rural Health Workforce Incentives Scheme?

NSW Health introduced the Rural Health Workforce Incentives Scheme (RHWIS) in July 2022. The RHWIS is a comprehensive incentive package that aims to attract, recruit, and retain key health workers in rural and regional locations employed in positions that are hard-to-fill or critically vacant. The RHWIS provides incentives that are above award and industrial instrument entitlements, and is provided to health workers if they are in eligible services and positions.

### What incentives are available in the RHWIS?

From the 11 August 2023 to 30 June 2026, NSW Health offers increased incentive packages for health workers commencing in new roles in rural and regional locations up to \$20,000. NSW Health utilises the Commonwealth Modified Monash Model (MM) to determine rurality of a location.

Location	1 <sup>st</sup> year – Attraction and Relocation	2 <sup>nd</sup> year – Retention
MM3 and MM4 Hard to Fill positions	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$5,000
MM3 and MM4 Critical positions	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$10,000
MM5, MM6, and MM7	Up to \$20,000	Up to \$10,000

NSW Health offers various monetary and non-monetary incentives and benefits under the RHWIS, through the following structure:

Rating	Base Incentives	Hard to fill positions	Critical positions
MM3	Relevant Award Entitlements Accommodation assistance	Professional development Computer/Internet reimbursement Additional personal leave	<i>Hard to fill +</i> Relocation benefits Return airfare home Compassionate travel
MM4	Relevant Award Entitlements Accommodation assistance	Professional development Computer/Internet reimbursement Additional personal leave Additional base salary	<i>Hard to fill +</i> Relocation benefits Return airfare home Compassionate travel
MM5	Relevant Award Entitlements Accommodation assistance	Professional development Computer/Internet reimbursement Additional personal leave Additional base salary Return airfare home Compassionate travel	<i>Hard to fill +</i> Relocation benefits Family travel assistance
MM6	Relevant Award Entitlements Relocation benefits Accommodation assistance	<i>MM5+</i> Reimbursement of utilities Family travel assistance Transfer incentives Study assistance Cash bonus	
MM7	Relevant Award Entitlements Relocation benefits Accommodation assistance	<i>MM6+</i> Credit for study leave	

NSW Health organisations that have services and positions eligible for the RHWIS will determine what incentives they will offer. Incentives may vary dependent on the location and whether the position is hard-to-fill or critically vacant.

There are also incentives and benefits that are also as base benefit meaning it is in addition to your maximum package value.

For further information on what incentives are available, please refer to the NSW RHWIS Policy Directive: [Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au).

---

## Who is eligible for the RHWIS?

The RHWIS is available to health workers in eligible services and positions.

Eligible services and locations must be based at a [Modified Monash Model \(MM\) 3 – 7](#) facilities, and be assessed by the health organisation as hard-to-fill or critically vacant. Not all health workers, services, and locations will be eligible for the RHWIS.

A health worker in the context of the RHWIS, refers to employees of the NSW Health Service, engaged under the Health Services Act. The RHWIS incentives do not apply to contractors, locums, agency nurses, Visiting Medical Officers, and contingent workforce who are not paid through NSW Health payroll.

Existing health workers may also be eligible for the RHWIS and should discuss these arrangements with their manager.

Jobs that have incentives offered under the RHWIS should be easily identifiable on the [NSW Health Career Portal](#), or through contacting the hiring manager or local recruitment office. All applicants who are successful in obtaining an incentivised position will have an opportunity to discuss their incentive packages with the NSW Health organisation.

---

## Is there an application process for the RHWIS?

There is no formal application process required from health workers for the RHWIS.

For new or vacant positions, posted positions that are eligible to be incentivised under the RHWIS can be found here on the [NSW Health Career Portal](#). General details about incentives applicable to the position can be discussed at any stage of the application process with the job convenor or local recruitment unit. Successful applicants to these positions will then be able to discuss the specific incentives available with their hiring manager.

Existing health workers should discuss with their manager whether they are eligible for incentives, or their local People and Culture unit. Each health organisation will discuss with existing health workers in eligible positions regarding incentive packages.

---

## Can health workers have multiple incentive packages?

Health workers are only able to receive one state-funded incentive package at a time. If they are eligible for more than one state-funded incentive package (e.g., Allied Health HECS-HELP package) then they will have to elect which package to receive.

If a health worker works across multiple incentivised positions, they should discuss the incentives available with their manager or local People and Culture unit.

---

## Can incentive packages be transferred when changing positions?

Transferring of incentive packages will depend on the location, position, and time served by the health worker in their current position. Eligibility to transfer existing incentive packages will be determined and approved by the health organisation. Health workers who are receiving incentive packages and are changing or moving positions should discuss with the impacts with their manager or local People and Culture unit.

---

## Can temporary or contract health workers be eligible for incentives?

Contracted and temporary staff working in eligible locations and positions can receive incentives. Discuss this with the hiring manager, service manager, or local People and Culture unit.

---

## How are incentives processed, paid, and for how long?

The processing of non-monetary incentives will depend on the actual incentive, for example, additional leave is added to leave balances. The payment of monetary incentives is processed through normal payroll, including any allowances or reimbursements. Health organisations can advise the way an incentive will be processed or paid.

Generally, health workers will receive negotiated incentives for the duration of their contract/term calculated to a 12-month period. The 12-month period commences from the first effective date of application of the incentive.

Health organisations may review eligible positions every 12 months. Where there may be changes to position eligibility and therefore changes to the incentives packages, incentivised health workers will be given 12 months' notice prior to changes in their packages. Where there are no changes, the negotiated incentives packages will continue to be paid for the next 12-month period.

Any unused incentive will either be paid out to the value at the end of the 12-months or forfeited.

---

## Is there a repayment requirement?

Health workers receiving incentive packages are required to make repayments if they leave their role within 18 months of their effective incentive date. This is applicable only for the first 18 months of their role.

The repayment requirement does not apply to health workers who are leaving an incentivised role to take up another incentivised role at a location with a **higher MM** classification.

Time served in role	Repayment requirement
Less than 6 months	100% of gross incentive payments received to date
Greater than 6 months and less than 1 year	65% of gross incentive payments received to date
Greater than 1 year and less than 18 months	35% of gross incentive payments received to date
Greater than 18 months	Nil

---

## How is tax impacted by the RHWIS?

**Applicants are advised to consult a financial advisor before finalising their package.** NSW Health are unable and do not provide advice on unique and individual financial and tax circumstances.

Health organisations are responsible for the application of appropriate taxation treatment to all incentive items being provided. The incentive package made available to individual health workers is valued at its gross value. Any fringe benefit tax liability is not counted as part of the value of the package and the employing health organisation is responsible for payment of any fringe benefit tax incurred.

Incentives offered that are reportable fringe benefits (where the health worker's total taxable value

of certain benefits exceed \$2,000 a year) are required to be reported as a “reportable fringe benefit amount” (RFBA) on health worker income statements (previously known as payment summary). Total RFBA is not taxable income but is taken into consideration when assessing eligibility for certain government benefits and concessions such as Medicare Levy Surcharge, Higher Education Loan Payment (HELP), superannuation benefits, child support and family assistance.

---

## What are some of the considerations working for rural and regional NSW?

Working in rural and regional NSW can be an extremely rewarding experience. You are delivering essential services to communities, reducing the need for them to travel long distances to access care. There are frequent opportunities for professional development and growth compared to what might be available in metro areas.

There are also challenges that some health workers face when working in these large geographical areas including professional and personal isolation, homesickness, and an initial anonymity in a community that you have just moved to. It is important to understand these challenges and prepare yourself.

There is plenty of support in and throughout rural and regional NSW that will contribute to your transition and resilience. Your time in rural and regional NSW can be a fantastic career opportunity and rewarding personal experience.

---

## Further questions and enquiries

For questions on position eligibility, incentive packages, and application, please contact your manager or the relevant health organisation’s local People and Culture unit.

For more general information:

- Visit our website: [Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme - Imagine Rural \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/rural-health-workforce-incentive-scheme)
- Read our policy: [Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/rural-health-workforce-incentive-scheme)
- Send us an email: [NSWH-RHWIS@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NSWH-RHWIS@health.nsw.gov.au)