

Sycamore Physician Assistant Rural Care (SPARC) Scholarship Description

Award Constituency

Each cohort of 1st year didactic students enrolled in the Indiana State University Physician Assistant (PA) Program starting in 2022.

Scholarship Funding Purpose and Source

The purpose of the Sycamore Physician Assistant Rural Care (SPARC) scholarship is to provide an opportunity for students to participate in an effort to increase the number of PA students completing clinical rotations in rural and medically underserved populations. Recruitment into the SPARC program is designed to attract students who are or have lived in rural or medically underserved communities (MUC), particularly veterans, who are then more likely to return to these areas to live and work as a provider of medical care. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is the source of funding.

Scholarship Funding: Upon completing the requirements of the SPARC Scholar Award, each winner will receive the following:

- A living expenses (travel/housing) stipend of \$500/rotation awarded for each of the two consecutive 4-week rotations in MUC/s. Therefore, each student will receive a maximum of \$1,000.
- \$10,000.00 paid to awardees upon completion of scholarship requirements by the end of the applicant's clinical phase.

Eligibility criteria for the scholarship

To apply for this scholarship, an Indiana State University PA student must meet the following criteria:

- PA student must have successfully matriculated into the Indiana State University Physician Assistant Program.
- PA student must be in their didactic year (1st year) of their PA training.
- PA student must have an interest in serving the medical needs of persons in rural and/or medically underserved communities.
- PA student must have an interest in completing the specific clinical rotation requirements as described in this application.
- Complete an essay that presents your understanding of health care challenges facing MUCs and Rural Health providers/patients. Further, explain what you hope to achieve by participating in this initiative, include thoughts/ideas on how to improve the care of patients in these areas. Finally, describe why you hope to pursue a career serving these communities.
- If chosen as a finalist, be prepared to give an oral presentation supporting their essay and application.
- Maintain excellent academic and professionalism standing while in the program (No academic or professionalism probations).

- Agree to focus their required research project on a topic including mental health, opioid use disorder, or pain management, thus directly tying their curriculum to their additional clinical rotation responsibilities.

Communication plan to connect with potential applicants

Applicants will be aware of this scholarship via the ISU PA Program Website and/or through other social media vehicles such as email, Facebook, etc. The cohort due to matriculate in spring of 2022 will be directly emailed by the program as soon as criteria are finalized. Further directions/instructions to students will be through program faculty or other faculty mentors from the College of Health and Human Services via email, phone, or by direct verbal communication.

Awarding process

SPARC award selection criteria:

Three scholarship recipients per cohort are selected. A committee consisting of Physician Assistant faculty and at least two inter-professional team members will evaluate all applications. Five (5) finalists will be selected based on a collective review of the applicants confirmed eligibility, essay, research project proposals, professionalism, academic performance and overall understanding of this grant’s purpose and goals. Once five finalists are chosen, these individuals will give a presentation to the committee supporting their overall application for the three Scholarships.

Selection rubric utilized by committee members is as follows. Selected applicants must score either “Good” or “Excellent” in each category to be eligible:

Scoring Rubric

	Poor	Good	Excellent
Eligibility	Fails to meet eligibility requirements in the following area:	No substantive area where they do not meet the requirements.	Meets all eligibility requirements
Essay	Does not demonstrate understanding of the program or lacks detail.	Generally, meets the expectations of the essay with minimal weaknesses.	Well written and meets all expectations.
Research Proposal	Proposal is not well thought out or does not reflect program goals.	Proposal meets most expectations but has some weaknesses.	Proposal is well developed and reflects a good

			understanding of the program's goals.
Professionalism	A professionalism concern has occurred.	Does not have any professionalism citations and is a good student.	Does not have any professionalism citations and is an excellent student.
Academic Performance	Has experienced academic probation.	No academic probation but has failed some exams.	No academic probation and no exam failures.
Understanding of this grant's purpose and goals.	Does not demonstrate a good understanding of the goals of this program.	Demonstrates a good understanding of the program but some concern about their long-term commitment to MUCs.	Demonstrates a good understanding of the program and appears to be committed to serving in MUCs long term.

Awardees will be notified of their selection, in writing, during the second (summer) semester. A plaque recognizing scholarship winners will be presented at the ISU PA Program White Coat Ceremony held every spring prior to students beginning clinical rotations.

By accepting the SPARC Scholar Award, students agree to:

- Participate in the rotation scheme as designed. The students will participate in an 8-week rural experience. This will consist of two consecutive 4-week rotations at a rural or designated Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) site in one of the SPARC counties. The rotation must be in primary care which SPARC designates as Family Medicine (FM), Internal Medicine (IM), Behavioral Health (BH), pediatrics, or geriatrics. Each 4-week rotation must be completed at the same site and can consist of 8 weeks in the same discipline, or 4 weeks in one and 4 weeks in another. Valley Professionals Community Health Center (VPCHC) has multiple disciplines, so the student would have the opportunity to complete, for example, 4 weeks of FM then 4 weeks of BH at that same site.
- Provide their preceptor's patient/s and/or community with an educational program or event with a focus on the pain management, Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), or other Behavioral health issues relevant to the community.
- Present their community outreach project and outcomes prior to graduation as their Capstone Project.
- Consent to provide ISU PA's program data containing their name, place, and location of their future employment locations.