

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT & CONSULTING
SCHOLARSHIPS & CLINICAL EDUCATION

**Health Professional Scholarship Program (HPSP)
FY 2020 Annual Report**

Congress established HPSP on August 26, 1980, under Public Law (P. L.) 46-330. The original authority for HPSP expired on December 31, 1998. HPSP was re-authorized through December 31, 2014, by Section 603 of P.L. 111-163, The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Service Act of 2010, and extended through December 31, 2019, by Section 302 of P.L. 113-146, Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014. HPSP was extended through December 31, 2033, by Section 301 of P.L. 115-182, The VA Mission Act of 2018. It is codified in 38 U.S.C. 7601 through 7619, 7633, 7634, and 7636.

The HPSP allows VHA to award scholarships to VA and non-VA employees pursuing degrees or training in health care disciplines for which recruitment and retention of qualified personnel are difficult. The academic curricula covered under this initiative include education and training programs in fields leading to appointments or retention in Title 38 or Hybrid Title 38 positions listed in 38 U.S.C. Section 7401. The specific health care professions must be in one of the top five critical career fields as determined through succession planning by VHA Workforce Planning. Scholarships for this fiscal year included: medical students, physician assistant, pharmacist, medical technologist, and nursing. As of September 30, 2020, VA has awarded 502 scholarships to HPSP participants since the program started in 2016.

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SECTION 1: FY 2020 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

During FY 2020, the Scholarships & Clinical Education (S&CE) office provided support to 267 participants attending school and 235 preparing for placement, in deferment status for continuing education (i.e. residency program attendance) or completing service obligation periods (SOP) from HPSP scholarship awards.

Applicants submitted a total of 1053 requests for new awards to the national program office during FY 2020. Selected applications are provided multi-year scholarship funding. If an applicant chose not to accept a scholarship award, it was categorized as Declined.

Applications Table 1 displays the number of new applications received during FY 2020 and the disposition of those applications.

Table 1. FY 2020 Applications

Program	Applications	Selected & Accepted	Declined	Total Award	Avg Award	Funding Through
Nursing	345	52	4	\$4,126,638	\$78,606	FY 2023
Physician Assistants	308	14	1	\$1,256,736	\$89,766	FY 2022
Medical Students*	115	66	9	\$14,701,997	\$222,757	FY2024
Pharmacy	257	13	0	\$621,613	\$47,816	FY 2022
Medical Technologist	28	5	0	\$167,209	\$33,441	FY 2022
Totals	1053	150	16	\$20,874,193	\$139,161	

***Note:** The Medical Students section includes 12 selections from Teague-Cranston schools in the Veterans Healing Veterans Medical Access and Education Scholarship Program (VHVMAESP). This is a pilot program.

Active Participants Table 2 provides a breakdown of participants who were active in the educational phase of their scholarship or service obligation period on September 30, 2020.

Table 2. Participants Active During FY 2020

Program	In School	Completed School*	In SOP	Completed SOP
Nursing	96	34	66	23
Medical Technologist	6	2	2	0
Physician Assistants	71	21	35	8
Physical Therapist	13	9	26	11
Pharmacy	13	0	0	0
Medical Students**	66	0	0	0
Totals	267	66	127	42

Note:** Participant may be in deferment status for continuing education which could include advance degree completion or residency program attendance. Participant can also be pending final placement status while final onboarding is being completed. Breaches are tracked in Section 3 and are not included in this total. *** The Medical Students section includes 12 selections from Teague-Cranston schools in the VHVMAESP. This is a pilot program.

Budget

During FY 2020, S&CE administered an annual HPSP budget of \$10.435 million with an execution rate of 99 percent. Participant program changes and the return of excess or unused funds at the end of the fiscal year directly contributed to preventing 100 percent execution. Table 3 shows funding expenditures by program and participants for FY 2020.

Table 3. FY 2020 HPSP Budget Execution

Program	Budget	Funding Expended
Nursing	\$3,450,000	\$3,446,891
Medical Technologist	\$210,000	\$109,216
Physician Assistants	\$4,061,000	\$4,060,717
Physical Therapist	\$782,000	\$781,518
Medical Students*	\$2,170,000	\$2,265,424
Pharmacy	\$231,000	230,059
Totals	\$10,435,000	\$10,893,825

*Note: The Medical Students section includes 12 selections from Teague-Cranston schools in the VHVMAESP. This is a pilot program.

Total Awards

Since inception of the scholarship program in FY 2016 through September 30, 2020, VA has awarded 502 scholarships to HPSP participants. Table 4 provides the number of scholarships and funding awarded for each program.

Table 4. Total Awards Since Inception

Program	Participants	Funding
Nursing	225	\$14,691,746
Medical Technologist	11	\$435,031
Physician Assistants	140	\$10,591,248
Physical Therapist	59	\$3,691,172
Medical Students*	66	\$14,071,997
Pharmacy	13	\$621,613
Total	502	\$44,102,807

*Note: The Medical Students section includes 12 selections from Teague-Cranston schools in the VHVMAESP. This is a pilot program.

Academic program Completions

Table 5 shows the number of participants who completed their academic programs, the scholarship program used, and the level of degree completion.

Table 5. Academic Program Completions

Program	Completion Degree Level	Completed Education
HPSP	Baccalaureate	98
	Masters	87
	Doctorate	50
HPSP Total		235

Customer Service

At the end of FY 2020, S&CE conducted its annual customer satisfaction survey of scholarship participants and the first annual customer satisfaction survey of Selection Committee members. The purpose of the survey was to solicit feedback from stakeholders on satisfaction with program administration and areas requiring improvement.

Selection Committee Respondents – 8

Participant Respondents – 53

- 100% of selection committee respondents had positive responses concerning their customer service experience.
- 97% of participants responding had positive responses concerning their customer service experience.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- FAQs
 - Add FAQs to AMS Landing Page.
- Timeline for Notification
 - Add to AMS Landing Page
- More Program Information Availability
 - Bolster program information availability to AMS Landing Page.

SECTION 2. INITIATIVES

Along with the normal HPSP selections for FY 2020, the program office initiated a pilot program targeting medical students in the Veterans Healing Veterans Medical Access and Education Scholarship Program (VHVMAESP). This program was also included in the VA Mission Act of 2018 and was executed using the HPSP regulations. Nine Teague-Cranston schools selected 21 medical students (all Veterans). Of the 21 selections, only 12 students accepted the scholarship.

During FY 2020, the development of the VA HPSP Application Management System started. While the system was not available for the selection of applicants for this FY, the system has since stood up for the Acceptance, Review, Scoring, Selection, and Final Awarding of scholarships. Development and improvement will continue into FY 2021.

HPSP Nursing Residency Initiative.

SECTION 3: BREACH OF AGREEMENT

A participant breaches their scholarship agreement if for any reason they fail to complete their academic program, or if they fail to fulfill their service obligation period. A total of two scholarship participants have breached their agreements. Table 11 shows the number of approved scholarships and the HPSP breach rate since inception. Table 12 shows the number of participants who breached during FY 2020.

Table 11. Breach Rates Since Inception

Breach Rates Since Inception			
Program	Approved Scholarships	Breached	Percentage
Nursing	225	6	2.67%
Medical Technologist	11	1	9.09%
Physician Assistants	140	5	3.57%
Physical Therapist	59	0	0%
Medical Student	54	0	0%
Pharmacy	13	0	0%
Totals	502	12	2.39%

Table 12. Participant Breaches During FY 2020

Program	Breached During FY 2020
Nursing	2
Medical Technologist	0
Physician Assistants	1
Physical Therapist	0
Medical Student	0
Pharmacy	0
Total	3

SECTION 4: FY 2020 CHALLENGES IMPACTING PROGRAMS

During FY 2020, HPSP continues to face operational challenges in administering the scholarship program.

- Facility knowledge of HR hiring functions with regards to hiring trainees.
- Individual hiring preferences at individual facilities concerning targeted occupations (Physician Assistants verses Nurse Practitioners).
- Managing large application pool without an application management system significantly increases administrative oversight requirements.
- Clinical attendance limitation associated with COVID19 delayed some graduations. Minor changes in required tuition funding as virtual modalities were maximized.

SECTION 5: OCCUPATIONS SUPPORTED BY PROGRAM

The specific health care professions must be in one of the top five critical career fields as determined through succession planning by VHA Workforce Planning. Scholarships for this fiscal year included: medical students, physician assistant, medical technologist, pharmacist, and nursing.

Payments to student selected for the HPSP scholarship are broken down into three distinct parts: Tuition and Approved Fees, Monthly Cost-of-Living stipends, and an annual payment to cover books and miscellaneous equipment.

SECTION 6: EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTED BY PROGRAM

During FY 2020, 77 educational institutions received tuition and mandatory fees payments. Table 14 provides a listing of awards by educational institutions by occupations during FY 2020.

Table 14. FY 2020 Awards by Educational Institution

University/College	2020 PA	2020 Nurse	2020 PT	2020 MD	2020 MT	2020 Total
A.T. Still University	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,781.00	\$ -	\$ 30,781.00
Arizona State University	\$ -	\$ 10,661.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,661.00
Boston College	\$ -	\$ 47,039.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 47,039.00
Campbell University	\$ 60,920.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 141,550.00	\$ -	\$ 202,470.00
Chatham University	\$ 148,103.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 148,103.50
Duquesne University	\$ 147,993.00	\$ 9,054.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 157,047.00
East Tennessee State University	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,458.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,458.50
Emory and Henry College	\$ 92,944.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 92,944.00
Emory University	\$ 138,310.80	\$ 478,482.70	\$ 37,110.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 653,904.20
Florida International University	\$ 36,312.47	\$ 6,721.60	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 43,034.07
Georgia Southern University	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,900.00	\$ -	\$ 6,750.00	\$ 15,650.00
Howard University	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55,752.30	\$ -	\$ 55,752.30
Indiana University	\$ 28,693.90	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31,106.62	\$ -	\$ 59,800.52
Loma Linda University	\$ 17,604.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 27,645.00	\$ 45,249.00
Marquette University	\$ -	\$ 485,142.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 485,142.00
Maryville University	\$ -	\$ 52,966.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 52,966.00
Medical University of South Carolina	\$ 8,274.00	\$ 37,941.20	\$ 8,842.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55,057.20
Midwestern University	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,966.00	\$ -	\$ 24,966.00
Northern Arizona University	\$ -	\$ 6,818.00	\$ 20,615.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 27,433.00

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Nova Southeastern University	\$ 112,912.99	\$ 9,994.00	\$ -	\$ 82,491.82	\$ -	\$ 205,398.81
Ohio University	\$ -	\$ 2,893.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,893.00
Oregon Health and Science University	\$ -	\$ 54,487.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 54,487.00
Philadelphia College	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 34,668.00	\$ -	\$ 34,668.00
Shenandoah University	\$ 46,670.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 46,670.00
Stephens College	\$ 49,875.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 49,875.00
Texas Tech University	\$ 43,066.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,202.50	\$ -	\$ 64,269.20
University of Colorado	\$ -	\$ 15,030.75	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15,030.75
University of Miami	\$ -	\$ 14,134.33	\$ 36,618.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,752.33
University of Minnesota	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,714.87	\$ 13,218.00	\$ -	\$ 22,932.87
University of New England	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,475.00	\$ -	\$ 30,475.00
University of Northern Colorado	\$ -	\$ 5,848.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,848.00
University of Oklahoma	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15,686.75	\$ -	\$ 15,686.75
University of Saint Mary	\$ -	\$ 33,932.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 33,932.00
University of San Diego	\$ -	\$ 53,590.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 53,590.00
University of South Carolina	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,000.00	\$ -	\$ 24,000.00
University of Utah	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,533.00	\$ -	\$ 21,533.00
University of Washington	\$ 159,632.00	\$ 13,758.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 173,390.00
Walden University	\$ -	\$ 131,946.25	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 131,946.25
Meharry Medical College	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,839.50	\$ -	\$ 30,839.50
Florida Gulf Coast University	\$ 19,961.74	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 19,961.74
Gannon University	\$ 38,085.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 38,085.00
Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 46,100.00	\$ -	\$ 46,100.00
Case Western Reserve University	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 33,802.00	\$ -	\$ 33,802.00
Wayne State University	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 38,527.00	\$ -	\$ 38,527.00
University of Illinois	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 142,778.67	\$ -	\$ 142,778.67
University of Maryland	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 34,344.25	\$ -	\$ 34,344.25
Creighton University	\$ -	\$ 21,509.00	\$ -	\$ 30,848.00	\$ -	\$ 52,357.00
Texas A&M University	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 26,274.00	\$ -	\$ 26,274.00
Des Moines University	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 26,860.00	\$ -	\$ 26,860.00
New York Institute of Technology - Arkansas	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31,851.00	\$ -	\$ 31,851.00
DeSales University	\$ 14,200.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,200.00
Ohio Dominican University	\$ 14,650.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,650.00
South University - Savannah	\$ 18,800.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,800.00
Trevecca Nazarene University	\$ 14,103.22	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,103.22

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Ohio State University	\$ -	\$ 9,661.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,661.80
University of Louisville	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 85,392.50	\$ -	\$ 85,392.50
West Virginia University School of Medicine	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,699.00	\$ -	\$ 21,699.00
Medical College of Wisconsin	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 57,347.00	\$ -	\$ 57,347.00
Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 29,205.00	\$ -	\$ 29,205.00
Touro University Nevada	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 29,275.00	\$ -	\$ 29,275.00
University of Southern Mississippi	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,963.00	\$ 5,963.00
Winston Salem State University	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,404.65	\$ 1,404.65
University of Mississippi Medical Center	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,727.84	\$ 8,727.84
Wake Forest University	\$ 6,909.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,909.50
California State University - Channel Islands	\$ -	\$ 4,120.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,120.00
Wilkes University	\$ -	\$ 18,951.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,951.00
Loyola University - Chicago	\$ -	\$ 15,352.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15,352.00
Kent State University	\$ -	\$ 5,883.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,883.00
Nebraska Methodist College	\$ -	\$ 15,875.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15,875.00
Frontier Nursing University	\$ -	\$ 3,850.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,850.00
Resurrection University	\$ -	\$ 11,102.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,102.00
University of North Carolina - Wilmington	\$ -	\$ 4,018.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,018.00
Gwynedd Mercy University	\$ -	\$ 18,800.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,800.00
University of Maryland - Baltimore	\$ -	\$ 8,240.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,240.00
Pacific Lutheran University	\$ -	\$ 10,332.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,332.00
Salem State University	\$ -	\$ 5,645.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,645.00
Purdue University	\$ -	\$ 14,996.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,996.00

SECTION 7: FY 2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- FY2020 was a large selection of scholarship recipients for. The program selected 138 scholarship recipients, of which 16 declined.
- During FY20, HPSP supported 490 scholarship recipients totaling nearly \$10.434M in tuition and approved fees, monthly cost of living stipends, and one-time annual book stipends.
- Responding to more than 10K email customer service inquires, the program maintained a 100% positive customer satisfaction rating for FY20. The program

received numerous direct email responses to the program supervisor identifying superior performance.

- Began developing and implementing requirements for new Application Management System. **Result:** System continues through development phases and applications are currently being received through this new system.

SECTION 8: RURAL

Rural Location	State	Placements
Tomah VA Medical Center	WI	2
Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center	PA	1
Martinsburg VA Medical Center	WV	2
San Juan VA Medical Center	PR	1
Aleda E. Lutz Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center	MI	1
Danville VA Medical Center	IL	1
Kansas City VA Medical Center	MO	1
Seattle VA Medical Center	WA	1
Fort Meade VA Medical Center	SD	1

As of September 30, 2020, HPSP placed 176 students of which 11 went to rural locations at a rate of 6.25%. It is sometimes a barrier to place new graduates in rural locations due to experience level. In addition, rural locations do not have Transition to Practice (TTP) or Post-Baccalaureate Nursing Residency (PBNR) programs.

SECTION 9: FY 2021 GOALS

- The Mission Act of 2018 authorized the implementation of a PA Pilot Program targeting veterans. Make selections to meet the requirements of this program. Potential Issues: The requirements are not as lucrative as those associated with standard VA HPSP. With the veteran selection advantage in VA HPSP, this pilot will be selecting individuals that may not be qualified.
- Associate in Nursing targeted location scholarship offerings. The implementation will target rural locations where Registered Nurses are difficult to recruit and retain.

- Fully implement the new VA HPSP Application Management System in the selection and acceptance of scholarship recipients. This will include tracking from application to the completion of the Service Obligation.
- Complete the implement a streamlined placement process for new RN's into a Transition To Practice (TTP) program while placing RN's with experience into critical positions nationwide, and deferring some RN's into critically needed residencies.
- Increase program awareness across the US. Solicit through additional email groups, enhanced we awareness, and beefing up information of the Application Management System Landing Site (develop FAQs, enhance page layout, gather data into scholarship specific pages, and including all program information on related pages).

SECTION 10: STUDENT PROFILE/SUCCESS STORY

My VA Story: Matthew Haugen

Getting into your aspired educational program is one of those exciting life events. Most students prepare thoroughly for school: mentally, physically, intellectually, and financially. We recognize the cost after a little research and planning, but don't truly comprehend student loan debt until we start paying off that debt from OUR paycheck. Gratefully, I had advice early on; "learn to live like a student (small budget) while in school and continue living like a student after school so you can quickly get out of debt." The logic of the advice is sound: Live within a small budget and suffer a little now so you can live a better, more stable, lifestyle later. I had two main goals when choosing my dream career: 1) To be in healthcare, due to my passion for medicine and in serving others; 2) To support my wife and growing family on a single income with little financial stress. My chosen career was to be a Physician Assistant, the perfect career in my opinion. That goal started becoming reality when I was accepted into PA school, and, as expected, that looming debt followed. I set a LONG 10-year post-grad plan to get out of debt but wasn't satisfied. How could I get out of debt quicker? My wife and I were financially independent. To reach my goal of eliminating student loan debt in <5 years I needed extra help; a scholarship.

A few scholarships for PA students existed, but the stipulations weren't ideal for my interests. Then I learned about the new VA Scholarship Program. Details were still emerging at the time, but a career at the VA seemed to fit me. I did ROTC a bit and had worn a variety of other service-oriented uniforms in my life. An opportunity to serve veterans, in nearly any desired medical specialty, was highly attractive, so we decided to apply. I was elated to be awarded the Health Professional Scholarship Program (HPSP). My wife and I discussed the possible pros and cons of the scholarship, but quickly decided to accept the opportunity! I was awarded a 1-year scholarship with a ~\$1000/month stipend. Financial stress receded just enough to make way for the stresses of school to dominate me instead.

As graduation approached, questions about my imminent VA career arose. Thankfully, the VA staff members of the HPSP were always easy to get into contact with, and they always responded quickly. They stayed in close contact with me and advocated for me throughout the whole process of finding and obtaining a position within the VA, and then in transitioning me over to my new supervisors. They continued to follow up with me throughout my first two years of employment. The Chief of Surgery at the San Antonio VA, one of the main factors in my hiring, was very welcoming. He communicated quickly, thoroughly, and ensured I had the right resources and contacts at the San Antonio VA for a smooth start. He introduced me to my supervising attending, who happily brought me on to his great team. I was also introduced to senior PA's who mentored me and the other HPSP recipients hired. Each of the VA staff I interacted with on a day to day basis were friendly and supported me through not only being a new VA employee, but as a new PA. My entire new team quickly incorporated me as a valuable member. The first two years of my employment were a rollercoaster, as expected in any new atmosphere/career. My long-term plans of working at the VA continually changed with the joys and stresses I experienced. However, the more I worked at the VA, the more I appreciated it. My two-year obligation flew by. Why? Because of my dedicated team who loved going above and beyond for patients, because of the interest I had in my position's specialty, because of my attending, and mentors, who still willingly teach me, because of the work/life balance that prevents burnout, because of my quality family life, and more. It's also a great moral health benefit that our great patient care is based on evidenced-based medicine and not financial incentive.

The VA gave me this opportunity that has laid a strong foundation for my medical career. The positive features of my current position far outweigh the negative, upon which some seem to focus. The VA is a great place to work. I plan to continue my service at the VA for years to come. I hope I can continue growing to be a more valuable employee for the federal government, like my VA mentors are. HPSP is a great program that, as you can see, has blessed my family and I in many ways. Working at the VA allows me to practice medicine for the reasons that drew me to the medical field in the first place; to serve others. Though I still have student loan debt, I have a stable job that will allow me to be accountable for those debts. I am happy to report that I am still within budget to pay those off around my 5-year goal too. Most importantly, I'm in such a work environment that motivates me to be a better Physician Assistant, all thanks to the VA's Health Professional Scholarship Program.