

# HPSP Program Town Hall Meeting: March 14, 2025

## Questions and Answers (Q&A)

### Placement Questions

Q: Are we placed regionally based on where we live currently?

A: All recipients should plan to move at their own expense. Placements are based on the critical needs of the agency, critical vacancies, availability of open slots, funding and varies depending on the occupation.

Q: What is the average time from graduation, and passing the PANCE for us to start/begin to work?

A: Official placements do not begin until you officially pass the PANCE. We will forward your resume for consideration; however, most facilities will not consider you until you have passed the PANCE and the average time from graduation is 60-90 days.

Q: Do we receive more than one placement opportunity to choose from in the offer?

A: In a best-case scenario, you may be asked to provide five (5) preferences; ultimately, vacancies and the agency critical needs drive the placement process for VA. Depending on when you graduate, there may be a direct assignment to place you based on a critical need and your mobility agreement is used to meet that critical need.

Q: How are placements determined or if options are available?

A: In a best-case scenario, you may be asked to provide 5 preferences; ultimately, vacancies and the agency critical needs drive the placement process for VA. Depending on when you graduate, there may be a direct assignment to place you based on a critical need and your mobility agreement is used to meet that critical need.

Q: I'm in the PMHNP program where I'm not having luck with school or VA employer for clinical placements. Is there someone in the national level who can help with placements?

A: We are establishing new partnerships with the Office of Mental Health (OMH) to identify vacancies and improve the placement process for this discipline.

Q: Before graduating, how soon will we know where we will be placed?

A: Typically, from 6 months of graduation, a placement coordinator will ask you for an updated copy of your resume to begin your placement process. The goal is to have you placed within 90 days of graduation or licensure (whichever is later).

Q: When can we expect to hear about placement if we are graduating this spring?

A: If you are within 60 days of graduation, and you do not have an assignment, please reach out to [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) immediately.

Q: When we received the scholarship, it had a location on it to be placed – is that where we'll end up being placed at?

A: The only professions that had pre-placement assignments were ADN, LPNs/LVN and CNAs.

Q: When will we know our placements for VA hospitals?

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A: Typically, from 6 months of graduation, a placement coordinator will ask you for an updated copy of your resume to begin your placement process. The goal is to have you placed within 90 days of graduation or licensure (whichever is later).

Q: My school has a clinical rotation at my local VA, and I was unable to be placed there – will this be a problem for my scholarship?

A: No

Q: Is there anything we need to do or additional forms we need to complete as we transition from medical school to residency?

A: Yes, there are additional forms that you'll complete after matching and need to upload in AMS. Examples of forms may be your final transcripts, request for deferment eligibility, etc.

Q: As a PA student that's doing emergency medicine (EM) residency after graduation, will I be placed in emergency medicine following my graduation from residency? What if the sponsoring hospital offers me a job?

A: You will be placed in an EM position if it exists and ideally in the same location of your sponsoring VA facility; however, placements are based on the critical needs of the VA.

Q: If placements are postponed due to furlough or federal government status, how does this impact the recipient?

A: Once we receive guidance from VHA should placement be postponed due to furlough or other personnel status changes, we will communicate the changes to recipients on next steps.

Q: When can we expect placements to reach out for RNTTP for Spring 2025 graduates?

A: Typically, from 6 months of graduation, a placement coordinator will ask you for an updated copy of your resume to begin your placement process. The goal is to have you placed within 90 days of graduation or licensure (whichever is later).

Q: If the recipient worked at a VA center during the summer, will they still have priority placement with that center?

A: All candidates regardless of your current employment are subject to move at your own expense while meeting the critical needs of the agency. The only exception would be if you are participating with VA-STEP or the aforementioned skills.

Q: Are there additional placement sites than job posting on USA.gov? For example, for Physician Assistant, I only see 40 jobs posted but way more students awaiting placement.

A: Our program doesn't use USA.gov for placements. If you find a job announcement or opening, we encourage for you to apply and reach out to the HPSP program if you receive an offer.

Q: When will we know our placement location?

A: Typically, from 6 months of graduation, a placement coordinator will ask you for an updated copy of your resume to begin your placement process. The goal is to have you placed within 90 days of graduation or licensure (whichever is later).

Q: Could medical students going into residency get a little more guidance on how to fill out graduation clearance documentation as we are awaiting to find out where we will go for residency?

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A: Students will complete the Service Obligation Deferment Request when they have completed their MD/DO education program and once the student has been assigned a residency. Students will also be required to upload their final Transcript showing the degree conferred date into AMS.

Q: For medical students, when we complete residency, how far in advanced do we get placement?

A: Typically, from 6 months of graduation, a placement coordinator will ask you for an updated copy of your resume to begin your placement process. The goal is to have you placed within 90 days of graduation or licensure (whichever is later).

Q: Are jobs posted on USA Jobs an option for placement?

A: Our program doesn't use USA.gov for placements. If you find a job announcement or opening, we encourage for you to apply and reach out to the HPSP program if you receive an offer.

Q: For placement, will we interview for the position we're placed at?

A: Yes, informational interviews are conducted. These interviews are used to assess your communication style, interests, strengths, and to determine if you will be a good fit for the team.

Q: Where do we go to put in our preferences for locations after graduation?

A: These preferences will be solicited by the placement coordinators 6 months from the graduation.

Q: For the PMHNP residency, do we apply directly to the residency?

A: Each site has different requirements. Your placement coordinator will share options with you and reach out to residency directors. If there is an application requirement, we will notify you directly. Below is the [Office of Academic Affiliation site for PMHNP residency programs](#).

Q: Are we able to list preferred placement locations or do we need to wait for an available assignment list?

A: In a best-case scenario, you may be asked to provide 5 preferences; ultimately, vacancies and the agency critical needs drive the placement process for VA. Depending on when you graduate, there may be a direct assignment to place you based on a critical need and your mobility agreement is used to meet that critical need.

Q: We were told we get placement information 6 months prior to graduation, is that set-in stone or can it change? I don't want to move and then get placed somewhere else?

A: If you are a nurse or a nurse practitioner, you should prepare to move at your own expense twice; one for residency, and one for placement. All other skills will remain in their initial placement, until their service obligation is completed.

Q: When should we expect to hear back on after graduation placement?

A: Typically, from 6 months of graduation, a placement coordinator will ask you for an updated copy of your resume to begin your placement process. The goal is to have you placed within 90 days of graduation or licensure (whichever is later).

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Q: In the past I spoke to Eric while he was in charge of the scholarship program about my placement? Who should I talk to about that placement?

A: Please send your question to [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we will respond and assign you a placement coordinator.

Q: If we get hired at another VA, outside of the placement locations, under the scholarship, is it possible we can go where we get hired at?

A: Yes, this is possible. Please communicate with your placement coordinator.

Q: How do department placements work once assigned to a facility? Will we be given any options for the specific facility or just randomly placed?

A: In a best-case scenario, you may be asked to provide 5 preferences; ultimately, vacancies and the agency critical needs drive the placement process for VA. Depending on when you graduate, there may be a direct assignment to place you based on a critical need and your mobility agreement is used to meet that critical need.

Q: Are MDs assigned a VA location 6 months prior to graduating from med school or residency?

A: In a best-case scenario, you may be asked to provide 5 preferences; ultimately, vacancies and the agency critical needs drive the placement process for VA. Depending on when you graduate, there may be a direct assignment to place you based on a critical need and your mobility agreement is used to meet that critical need.

Q: I had reached out to the HPSP team earlier but never received a response; I wanted to make sure pursuing a fellowship in sports medicine from family medicine would be allowed by our scholarship.

A: Please send your question to [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we will respond accordingly.

Q: Do we need to attend a VA internship or any internship alright?

A: To meet the needs of the clinical requirement, you simply need to work within your current program of education and its clinical coordinator. Working with the existing affiliations at the school, you should make every effort to attend a clinical at a VA. In the event there are no clinical positions available due to not having enough positions or there not being an existing affiliation, the requirement will be waived.

Q: If the jobs on USA jobs are the only jobs what we can be placed because she like I will be new grad Physician Assistant but some of the jobs are higher level so are there other jobs?

A: Our program doesn't use USA.gov for placements. If you find a job announcement or opening, we encourage for you to apply and reach out to the HPSP program if you receive an offer.

Q: Do we have any ranking choice in where we are sent or any timeline as to when we will find out the approximate location?

A: In a best-case scenario, you may be asked to provide 5 preferences; ultimately, vacancies and the agency critical needs drive the placement process for VA. Depending on when you graduate, there may be a direct

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assignment to place you based on a critical need and your mobility agreement is used to meet that critical need.

Q: What forms/steps are needed on my end to be prepared for my placement, and then when can I expect to know where I am being placed?

A: Your placement coordinator will help you navigate any requirements as you work with your onboarding HR department.

## Service Obligation Agreement Questions

Q: Is it possible to make a move to another VA medical center in the middle of our service obligation?

A: The program is currently reviewing historical practice and application. We will have a response and address for the next scheduled town hall session.

Q: If the service obligation is impacted where we can't find placement, are we allowed to seek employment elsewhere until we can get placed with a VA?

A: If there is a significant factor that would hinder your timely placement, we may be able to explore options such as deferment and suspension and will need to reach out to your placement coordinator.

Q: Are there opportunities to work in a critical care setting while completing my service obligation? If I am interested in receiving my CRNA license?

A: Yes, you can seek opportunities while serving your service obligation agreement; however, the program does not cover financial expenses and you'll be required to maintain serving in a full-time clinical capacity should you choose to pursue.

## Notice of Change Form Questions

Q: Can you explain what happens if a student is placed on academic probation?

A: While on academic probation, should you have to retake any classes, then your monthly stipend or future tuition will be adjusted based on the new academic verification. Additionally, we defer to your academic institution's definition on academic probation or academic warning.

Q: Do advisors need to do anything if there are no changes to report each month?

A: No.

Q: Can you go more in depth about academic probation – my program places students on probation if they receive less than an 80% on 3 tests and not necessarily a timeframe of probation and it doesn't affect graduation.

A: While on academic probation, should you have to retake any classes, then your monthly stipend or future tuition will be adjusted based on the new academic verification. Additionally, we defer to your academic institution's definition on academic probation or academic warning.

Q: Can you explain what typically happens when a student is placed on probation?

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A: While on academic probation, should you have to retake any classes, then your monthly stipend or future tuition will be adjusted based on the new academic verification. Additionally, we defer to your academic institution's definition on academic probation or academic warning.

Q: My academic advisor needs help with the monthly check ins please she is new to the process and needs help these are her questions. She wants to know how the process works and where she needs to send the information. (Can she email it, or is there a submit on the academic verification form?)

A: Please email at [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we'll get you connected with your placement coordinator.

Q: Do she need to complete just the following areas. Advisor comment: "Does she need to state that I am in good academic standing and progressing per his program plan without interruption?"

A: Please email at [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we'll get you connected with your placement coordinator.

Q: Annual enrollment and satisfactory status/progress verified -does she need to check this box?

A: Please email at [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we'll get you connected with your placement coordinator.

Q: Advisor signature - she's asking if this needs to be electronic or if it needs to be her actual signature?

A: Please email at [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we'll get you connected with your placement coordinator.

Q: If costs associated with tuition increase from what were listed on our initial application, how do we report that?

A: Please email at [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we'll get you connected with your placement coordinator.

## Miscellaneous Questions

Q: What does plans have been submitted mean? Plans for what? Regarding what?

A: The plans discussed in the town hall referred to Question 4 on the Town Hall slides on what the status is with federal government and the reduction-in-force (RIF). As of March 14, 2025, agencies were given instructions to submit their agency plan on how they would prepare and plan for a reduction-in-force. The plans were submitted and require several agencies to review prior to agencies beginning to initiate.

Q: Will the PBRNR program be cancelled?

A: As of today, we have not received any notification of the program being cancelled.

Q: Will we receive a copy of the PowerPoint slides?

A: Yes, a copy of the slides and recording will be sent via email.

Q: Can VA HPSP scholars be eligible for SELRP?

A: No. Once your service obligation has been completed, you are eligible to apply for SELRP.

Q: Does the first year of HPSP qualify as a post-doc for APA/psychologists?

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A: No.

Q: Is VA protected in the event of a government shutdown?

A: In general, VA has appropriated funds that are budgeted out at least two (2) years in advance in the event of a potential government shutdown.

Q: Will all of us receive a link to the survey? And when can we expect it?

A: We are unsure what link to the survey you are referring to. Please email [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and provide further clarification.

Q: Anyone know what the HPSP website is? I only knew about AMS.

A: Here is a link to the HPSP website. <https://va-ams-info.intelliworx.com/>

Q: Will you be sending out the answers to the questions put in the chat at a different date, and if so, where can we access this?

A: We'll send this out via email by Friday, March 21, 2025.

Q: Will someone be able to tell us if the RIFs include our subfield placement – I'm just confused as to the contract we signed in light of job cuts.

A: As of today, we received word that all positions within the agency are being considered as part of the RIF.

Q: In the response email, please send out all the contact information for members of the team. I've had instances where it has taken many weeks to get a response through both email and calling.

A: We are sorry to hear that you've experienced a delay in responses. We've had several transitions and continue having staffing restraints. We would encourage for you to please send all general inquiries to [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we'll provide additional information based on who your appropriate point of contact(s) is.

Q: Could we have a separate info session with the VA-STEP program and other nursing programs later?

A: Unfortunately, we are unable to support separate sessions for specialty groups as our program is experiencing significant staffing constraints. We would encourage for you to reference the VA-STEP information for additional details on the HPSP Website.

Q: Will we have future sessions soon?

A: Yes.

Q: Could we have all questions answered on one running document so we can all see the answers please?

A: Yes, please save this attachment as a reference.

Q: Could you please have a session for upcoming graduates only?

A: Yes. Please be on the lookout for sessions for upcoming graduates.

Q: When will the scheduled meetings with the recipients start?

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A: Starting April 2025, we expect to offer at a minimum, a monthly town hall and subject to change based on staffing resources, days and times offered.

Q: Can you provide each group with their own session?

A: Unfortunately, we are unable to support separate sessions for specialty groups as our program is experiencing significant staffing constraints. We would encourage for you to reference the HPSP Website for additional information or email us at [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov).

Q: For licensure requirements, how should we prepare considering that we aren't sure which state we will be placed in after graduation?

A: Please correspond with your placement coordinator. VA has unique credentialing & privileging requirements that are recognized within all US states and territories. We encourage for you to reference the [VA National Standards of Practice](#) for additional information.

Q: Can future meetings be divided by specialty?

A: Unfortunately, we are unable to support separate sessions for specialty groups as our program is experiencing significant staffing constraints. We would encourage for you to reference the HPSP Website for additional information or email us at [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov).

Q: My question is asking whether the current government cuts will affect our ability to be hired on as a resident or full-time employee at the VA.

A: As of today, we have not received any notification on whether current government cuts will impact recruitment and hiring our program recipients into residency programs or placed as a full-time employee.

## Finance Questions

Q: When can I expect my tuition to be paid this semester?

A: Tuition will be paid once the academic institution invoices the VA through the Tungsten network and the HPSP staff review and approve that invoice. The process can range between 30-60 days, and we can send you guidance on how your academic institution needs to set up your invoice payments.

Q: I've had this scholarship since June-July of last year and my tuition hasn't been paid once.



A: Please reach out to us directly at [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) so we can review your case and determine what occurred.

Q: My tuition still has not been paid, is there an estimate of when that will be?

A: Please reach out to us directly at [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) so we can review your case and determine what occurred.

Q: Is the cost-of-living stipend taxable? Do I claim it on my taxes as income?

A: The cost-of-living stipend is non-taxable, and you will not receive a tax form from the VA.



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Q34: If I'm almost done with my program for BSN but have an option to do dual enrollment for the nurse practitioner program which is an extra 18 months, do I have an option to have this program paid for as well?

A: Yes, you can seek opportunities while serving your service obligation agreement; however, the program does not cover financial expenses and you'll be required to maintain serving in a full-time clinical capacity should you choose to pursue.

Q: My school's bursar office sent me this status update saying that "the customer has paid the invoice", but the school has not received the actual funds? Do you know if the invoice was accepted and when the funds should be received by my school?

A: Please reach out to us directly at [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) so we can review your case and determine what occurred. Once the invoice is approved, it will take up to 2 weeks (10 business days) for the electronic funds to transfer and occur.

Q: Can I expect to receive monthly stipends over the summer while I am doing research this summer as an OMS I medical student?

A: Research projects that do not require a leave of absence are allowed and recipients are approved to receive a stipend during semester breaks (i.e. summer). Research projects that require a leave of absence will place the recipient to not be eligible in receiving a monthly stipend.

Q: Do students get their COMLEX reimbursed? Do I get MY STEP 1 reimbursed? I took STEP 1 and filled out a reimbursement form but never heard back?

A: Unfortunately, the program does not cover expenses or reimburse for any board/license/registration fees.

Q: Who can we speak to about tuition payments?

A: Please send your question to [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we will respond accordingly.

Q: Are MD Step 1, 2, 3, covered?

A: Unfortunately, the program does not cover expenses or reimburse for any board/license/registration fees.

Q: Will there be a change to covering Step 1, Step 2, Step 3 exams?

A: No, we do not anticipate making any changes specific to the program covering for any exam expenses.

Q: I had a question about my tuition payment. I have emailed twice about the issue and have not received a response back yet. Is there a timeframe I can expect to receive the tuition payment?

A: Please send your question to [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we will respond accordingly.

Q: I had a question regarding my tuition payments- as of now, my school has not posted any payments. I am wondering if they have yet submitted an invoice to the VA, I think they were very delayed in doing so. I am finishing my third year soon and am hoping to catch up on my current balance.

A: Please send your question to [HPSPTeam@va.gov](mailto:HPSPTeam@va.gov) and we will respond accordingly.