

HPSP Program Town Hall Meeting: July 24, 2025

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Miscellaneous Questions

Q: Do we need to submit a request if we're in the RNTTP program?

A: Yes. Anyone attending a residency will need to request a deferment and submit to AMS.

Q: Are we able to request a deferment if we would like to continue our education to a PhD program?

A: In general, deferments are reserved for advanced clinical education or training. Unfortunately, you'll need to complete the service obligation first then you can continue with your higher education program(s).

Q: If jobs are internal at a VA facility, are you able to still place us at that facility after residency if there are many openings there?

A: In general, yes, that is the preference if a vacancy exists.

Q: When you complete your PB-RNR but don't plan on staying at that VA location, do we apply for RN positions at other locations? Or are we assigned a location?

A: In general, you are placed at that facility if a vacancy exists. If you request a transfer to another facility, please work with your HPSP placement coordinator(s).

Q: What is the process once I am halfway through my residency if I want to work at another facility?

A: The process is to work with your HPSP placement coordinator(s) – in general, you'll be placed at the facility where you completed the residency.

Q: Are we allowed to apply for positions after our PBRNR?

A: Work with your placement coordinator. If you are not aware of your placement coordinator email hpspteam@va.gov

Q: What is PBRNR?

A: Post-Baccalaureate Registered Nurse Residency

Q: What does clinical training look like for social workers in the field?

A: OAA funds 500 hours of clinical training (at \$15/hour) for over 1000 Master's of Social Work students at VA medical facilities around the country. We also fund post-degree SW fellowships at various facilities. In addition to funded allocations, many facilities host WOC (without compensation) master's students. For the experience and clinical training with social workers in the field, we recommend you reach out to Jennifer Silver/Amy Donaldson who partner with our program and can provide in-depth information.

Q: Does the VA accept accelerated ABSN students?

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A: It depends on what program you are seeking. For HPSP programs, it depends on whether we are offering, and the programs are eligible when we open the application cycle. For VA-STEP program, please reach out to HPSPTeam@va.gov and we'll connect you to the appropriate team member(s).

Q: For social workers, I was told that the VA gives you 3 years to get clinically licensed. If I were to complete my LMSW exam prior to the 3-year deadline, would I still be in good standing with the HPSP? I want to give myself room to take the LCSW exam multiple times, so I am not stressed by the 3-year timeline.

A: In general, you are in good standing if you meet all VA qualification standards and complete your obligated service.

Q: For VA HPSP 4th year medical students, do we submit deferments after we match into residency programs?

Q: Yes. HPSP recipients will need to submit the deferment request in AMS once you know your program.

Q: Will we face a breach of contract if we haven't started by August 1st, if we haven't been placed yet?

A: There are several criteria used when an HPSP recipient is found to breach their contract. Breach of contract for placement generally occurs when an HPSP recipient fails to begin their placement (such as starting their residency program) or employment; however, each situation is reviewed on a case-by-base basis on the reason.

Q: How long can we wait for a position at our facility to open after our nurse residency ends? Do we have a set time after our day of graduation to still wait for a position at our hospital to open (I remember the contract saying we have 90 days)?

A: Placements are based on the needs of the VA and recommend working with your HPSP placement coordinator(s) for any nursing placements. Time can be extended by the USH discretion.

Q: How soon does HR reach out to recipients to inform them they have an offer after the interview?

A: That will be the responsibility of the local HR at the facility and would defer to them on time frames for notification.

Q: So, does RNTTP not count towards our 2 years if we are deferring?

A: RNTTP does count toward the service obligation. Completing the deferment is for our record and to keep track of who's where and which residency. Deferments are for educational purposes only and may add additional incurred time to your total obligated service.

Q: For HPSP Nursing, I received an email asking me to send my resume and pick my top locations but never received a location list nor was I asked if I wanted RNTTP or PBRNR. Is there an updated list for

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RNTTP? Also, my contract states that the commitment time is 2 years but from the last meeting there was talk of the commitment being 3 years, can someone clarify that? Thank you.

A: That's the current placement process, please send to assist the process. Previously that may have been the request. Currently there are not any funded RNTTP slots for this fiscal year. Your placement coordinator will discuss RNTTP or PBRNR, we can't guarantee one over the other but will take into consideration your preference. Your HPSP agreement can be found under documents in AMS. I will email your service obligation information.

Q: I am now working for the VA as a Social Worker. Are we required to do monthly check-ins to remain in good standing? How does the check-in process work now that I am employed with the VA?

A: In general, once you are currently employed and starting your obligated service, at a minimum, an annual check-in is required along with completing a form in AMS. *NOTE: For social workers, your obligated service effectively begins upon meeting all VA qualification standards and does not begin or consider licensed supervised hours leading up to eligibility for taking board exams/licensure.*

Q: What happens to my obligation to HPSP if the VA stops paying for schooling and I am forced to use my VR&E to complete my program?

A: If that should occur, please reach out to HPSP for further guidance.

Q: I saw that pharmacy VA-step recipients are also eligible to apply for the HPSP scholarship, could you clarify how the process and timeline would look for applying for each program?

A: If HPSP offers Pharmacy Scholarships for 2026, then you would apply through the normal application process for HPSP. To start an HPSP Application once the site reopens, visit site: <https://va-ams-info.intelliworx.com/hpsp/about-hpsp/> for updated application dates and to access the Apply Here button at the top of the page. You would also be able to apply for VA-STEP Pharmacy if a location in the area where you are attending school is offering the program. There are limited sites across the US offering the program and you should apply 5-6 months prior to completing your sophomore year of your pharmacy education.

Q: If RNTTP is no longer funded or offered for recipients in nursing, does time in PBRNR count towards your 2-year service obligation or is it still an additional 6 months?

A: RNTTP may have funding for next year that hasn't been released yet. No – the time you've completed in PBRNR does not count towards your service obligation and adds an additional 6 months.

Q: I am a PBRNR, and I would like to go to another facility other than the one I am training at. If I get a job offer at another facility other than the one, I am training at, Can I accept the offer?

A: Please work with your HPSP Placement Coordinator(s).

Q: My RNTTP isn't set to start until March 2026, is this acceptable?

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A: Please reach out to HPSPTeam@va.gov so we can address your specific concern. In general, the dates are established and if you have further questions, please reach out to your HR Specialist/Placement Coordinator(s).

Q: Just to confirm- our 1-year PB-RNR residency does not count toward the 2.5-year service commitment?

A: PBRNR does not count towards your service obligation and adds an additional 6 months to your HPSP agreement.

Program Reminders and Updates

Reminder: Program Office Weekly Hours

A: The HPSP Program Office hosts weekly office hours on Thursdays from 1-3pm PST. It is a great way to get your questions addressed or express concern- if you are seeking a timely response, we suggest attending these weekly office hours. Additionally, in lieu of August 7, 2025, office hours, we'll be hosting live training on how to request and complete deferments, suspensions and graduation forms.

Reminder: Scholarship Program Fees and Other Expenses (Covered and Not Covered)

A: In general, the program covers 100% of tuition expenses when your school provides an invoice that includes your courses and other required fees; however, there are several fees that the program does not cover and important for recipients to be aware of so they can plan accordingly for out-of-pocket expenses.

VA will pay tuition costs and mandatory/required fees (minus additional scholarships, grants, and/or gifts) for each academic term within the student's agreement period if the college or university includes them on the invoice.

Required/Mandatory Fees are defined as those fees assessed by the college or university to all students in the academic program for which the scholarship was awarded. For the purposes of HPSP/VIOMPSP, the Secretary of VA reserves the right of final approval of all fees paid under HPSP/VIOMPSP. General Guideline: If the fee is optional, the fee is not required by all participants in the plan of study, or if the student can opt out of the fee at any time, they do not qualify for reimbursement. Here is a list of fees that the Secretary will not reimburse:

-Health/Life/Dental Insurance

-Books/Equipment/Uniforms

-Room/Board

-Transportation Fees/Parking Fees/Travel Fees/Study Abroad Fees

-Union Fees/Association Fees/Class Dues

Certification Boards/NCLEX Reviews/Testing Fees/Licensure & Certification Fees

-COMLEX Level 1 & 2, USMLE Step 1 & 2 or other preparatory fees associated with licensure/certifications/registrations

-Transcript Fees/ID Re-Issuance & ID Maintenance Fees

-Late Charges/Repeat Coursework Fees/Withdrawal Fees/Penalty Fees

-Others as determined at the discretion of the Secretary of the VA or appointed staff.

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Reminder: APA (Psychology Internships)/Stipends

A: Starting in FY26, students who are seeking an APA psychology internship program will not receive stipends while completing their internship program for HPSP psychology recipients – the same rule applies to Vet Center HPSP psychology recipients too.

Reminder: Number of Declinations for Job Offers, Interviews, Residency Placements and Vet Center Placements

A: The number of declinations for HPSP recipients for job offers, interviews, or residency placements is two (2) times total for HPSP recipients and one(1) time total for HPSP Vet Center recipients. If a recipient exceeds the number of declines, they are considered not in good standing and are considered in breach of the contract. This change goes into effect August 1, 2025, and those with prior declinations are considered grandfathered due to recent programmatic changes.

Reminder: Breaches, Bill of Collections and Waivers

A: HPSP recipients do not have an option to submit a waiver until a breach has occurred, a bill of collection has been issued and notice of indebtedness has been sent. Submitting requests for medical waivers, financial hardships waivers or other waivers while in good standing in the program is not an option.