DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
Office of Academic Affiliations (10X1)
Washington, DC

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT
ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-22 (FISCAL YEAR 2022) TRAINEE SUPPORT FOR **ASSOCIATED HEALTH AND NURSING PROFESSIONS:** REQUEST FOR TRAINING POSITIONS & STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE REPORTS

1) OVERVIEW

This program announcement provides instructions, policies, and procedures to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities for the preparation and submission of Associated Health Education (AHE) and Nursing health profession trainee (HPT) requests to the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) for Academic Year (AY) 2021-22 (Fiscal Year 2022). AHE and Nursing HPTs are processed via this program announcement. Allopathic and osteopathic medicine, dentistry, and all advanced fellowship positions are handled by OAA's Medical and Dental Education and Advanced Fellowship sections, respectively. Please note: while the Nursing and AHE Sections of OAA have a combined allocations process, questions regarding a particular professional training program should be addressed to staff members of the respective Nursing or AHE sections.

a. **Submission and Due Dates:** Your Request for Training Positions and Standards of Excellence (SoE) reports entered online are due into the OAA web-based Support Center by **Friday, September 18, 2020.** The link to access the OAA Support Center is http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov (see instructions in Attachment B). **Please read through this entire announcement before responding to this request.**

Nine national program offices will have a SoE form that must be completed if your facility plans to request any funding (including existing base positions). SoE forms allow programs to be evaluated and new recommendations to be made regarding funding for AY 2021-22.

Seven national program offices have recommended that the distribution of AHE base positions remain unchanged for AY 2021-22; therefore, they will not need to complete a SoE form at this time.

Two professions are in the process of recompeting for funding through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Allocations for AY2021-22 will be determined by the RFP process and they do not need to complete a SoE process at this time.

In addition, please note that starting AY2021-22, the OAA will no longer fund nursing pre-degree (student) nursing positions with exception of Nurse Anesthesia Student positions.

SoE and position requests <mark>_are not needed_</mark> for the following nine professions:

- **Chiropractic Care**
- **Clinical Pastoral Education (recompete RFP)**
- **Licensed Professional Mental Health Counseling**
- **Marriage and Family Therapy**

- **Nursing**
- **Orthotics/Prosthetics (recompete RFP)**
- **Physical Therapy**
- **Physician Assistant**
- **Psychology**

b. **SurveyMonkey Request for Information:** OAA's AHE and Nursing sections are requesting that all training directors, even those not required to submit an SoE, answer a short request for information on HPT retention, administrative protective time, and other training-related matters. This data will help our office identify baselines and track trends in subsequent years. Please share this request widely to ensure that all profession-specific training directors receive the link below, including the nine professions identified above that will not complete an SoE or position request this year.

> **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GQL8J85**

The questions are provided below to assist training directors in preparing their responses before entering SurveyMonkey:
OAA SurveyMonkey Questions:
- What is the total number of **funded** Health Professions Trainees (HPTs) in your program who trained in your VA facility over the past academic year (AY 2019-20)?
- Of the **funded** HPTs who trained in your VA facility over the past year, how many were hired as permanent or term staff (non-HPT position) at a VA facility (either training VA facility or a different VA facility)?
- Of the **funded** HPTs who trained in your VA facility over the past year, how many have accepted another training position (e.g. post-doc, fellowship, residency, etc.) at a VA facility?
- What is the total number of **without compensation** (WOC) HPTs in your program who trained in your VA facility over the past academic year (AY 2019-20)?
- Of the **WOC** HPTs who trained in your VA facility over the past year, how many were hired as permanent or term staff (non-HPT position) at a VA facility (either training VA facility or a different VA facility)?
- Of the **WOC** HPTs who trained in your VA facility over the past year, how many accepted another training position (e.g. internship, post-doc, fellowship, residency, etc.) at a VA facility?
- How many hours per week of protected time has been allocated to your role as training director?
- As the training director, is the number of hours of allocated protected time adequate?
- As the training director, does your functional statement/position description address training-related responsibilities?
- Do your program's supervisors and training committee members have protected time for program support activities, such as developing and presenting seminars, application review, interviewing and editing documents? (If yes, then) how many hours on average per person?

c. **Program Office Consultation:** Using the reported SoE data, profession leads from the VHA Office of Patient Care Services will provide OAA their recommended distribution of stipends.

d. **Funding Notification:** Decisions regarding funding support for trainees will be communicated to VA facilities and Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISNs) on or about **Friday, December 11, 2020 (date is subject to change)**.

e. **Request for Information on Engagement with Vet Centers:** OAA's AHE section is requesting that all DEOs complete a short request for information to better understand current engagement with Vet Centers. Each DEO is asked to complete one question via the below SurveyMonkey link. https://www.research.net/r/VetCenter

2. GENERAL BACKGROUND

a. Funding for AHE and Nursing educational programs and positions are provided to fulfill VA's statutory mission to train clinicians for the VA and the Nation. These programs provide a pipeline of well-prepared clinicians for potential employment in VA. The training programs also contribute to the morale of training supervisors and to the overall quality of patient care.

b. VA facilities must demonstrate excellence in their training programs when competing for limited HPT funds. SoE reports in profession-specific clinical education and training, including interprofessional education, are designed to maintain and enhance the quality of clinical education in VA.

c. All training programs must also meet the following criteria:

1) VA clinical education and training programs must meet or exceed standards established by accrediting agencies and defined by the profession-specific national program office while adhering to VA's policies and goal of providing patient-focused interprofessional education.

2) The facility and VISN educational infrastructure (VA training/site director, faculty, and material resources) support excellence in clinical education and training.

3) Each profession must have a VA training/site director appointed in the same HPT profession. Similarly, the primary provider/clinical supervisor of record must also be appointed in the same profession as the HPT.

4) Training programs contribute to patient-focused care that reflects VA's health care priorities including, but not limited to, special emphasis programs such as blind rehabilitation, geriatrics and long-term care, homelessness, palliative care, polytrauma, psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery, PTSD, serious mental illness, suicide prevention/crisis intervention, spinal cord injury or dysfunction, substance use disorders, OEF/OIF/OND Veterans, and women's health.

5) When clinical training programs at the facility are affiliated with academic programs, the relationship should be enhanced through such activities as academic faculty appointments, membership in school or university academic committees, joint ventures in continuing education programs, research, and other scholarly activities.

6) Interprofessional education addresses knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate for successful collaboration and teamwork in integrated clinical settings. As our system of care is heavily dependent upon interprofessional care (e.g., PACT, mental health care and pain management), interprofessional educational models are desirable.

7) Results of evaluations are used to plan and implement program improvements that promote quality educational experiences for HPTs. These may include program-specific evaluations as well as the Trainee Satisfaction Survey (TSS) data.

3. POLICY

a) OAA has oversight responsibility for all clinical training programs. **HPTs must only be funded through funds administered by OAA. Local funding of HPTs is prohibited (see Handbook 1400.08, Education of Associated Health Professions).**

b) All **OAA-funded** AHE and nursing HPTs **must** be US citizens. No waivers will be granted based on inability to recruit citizens.

c) Where nationally recognized accrediting bodies exist, only HPTs from accredited programs are eligible for funding. Exceptions must be approved by OAA through a waiver process.

d) Properly executed Affiliation Agreements and supporting materials must be on file at the VA facility prior to the appointment of HPTs. These agreements must correspond with relevant federal and VA rules.

e) Stipend rates are established by OAA, based on analyses of comparable private sector rates and federal locality adjustments. Stipend rates **must not** be adjusted or supplemented locally. See http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/DBReports/LocBasedStipends.aspx for local stipend rates.

f) Stipends **must not** be split meaning that each identified AHE and nursing HPT stipend is for one HPT.

g) AHE and Nursing HPTs should be appointed using the following guidance: Associated Health and Nursing. Collaborating with your HR and education office is critical to ensure appropriate HPT appointments.

h) A completed "AY 2021-22 Profession-Specific SoE in Clinical and Interprofessional Education/Training" **must** be submitted for each profession requesting funded positions (**see Section 1a for listing of nine profession-specific exceptions**). Only **one report** is required from a facility for each profession being requested requiring this documentation. For example, if two pharmacy residents are requested in the **Regular HPT** program and one is requested for **GRECC**, submit only one completed Profession-Specific SoE for Clinical and Interprofessional Education/Training for Pharmacy **requesting all three positions.**

i) **Special Instructions:** Please note the instructions for reporting HPTs for the distinctive programs below is included on the profession-specific SoE**.**

- Beginning in academic year 2020-21, positions that were previously identified on your facility allocation plan as "CoE-PACT" and "HIV/Liver" now appear on the plan as AHE/Nursing "regular" positions. The positions previously approved/identified as "COE-PACT"

and "HIV/Liver" in 2019-20 are pre-approved/locked and will appear in a different record from the other AssocHReg positions for the same profession/education level.

  o **Note: The 2021-22 AY will be the final year that former CoE-PACT and HIV/Liver positions are pre-approved/locked. Beginning in AY 2022-23 the positions that were converted to "AssocHReg" in AY 19-20, will be considered part of AHE's regular allocation pool, meaning that each position is subject to possible redistribution in the overall allocations process.**

- Beginning in academic year 2020-21, the OAA will no longer fund nursing pre-degree (student) nursing positions, with exception of Nurse Anesthesia Student positions.

- OAA utilizes a separate funding mechanism for educational activities including Advanced Fellowships and Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (MIRECC). These positions should be requested through the OAA Advanced Fellowship process. **Beginning with the 2016-17 Academic Year, the Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) Fellowship Program was administratively realigned under OAA's Advanced Fellowships Section. Thus, PSR positions must not be requested through this AHE and Nursing Education process.**

- Facilities funded for 2-year neuropsychology or rehabilitation psychology positions will have these specialty psychology postdoctoral resident base positions identified as either "Psychologist Resident Year 1" or "Psychologist Resident Year 2." These are pre-approved since psychology does not have an SoE.

j) If HPTs are identified on the allocation plan as being funded through a special program (e.g., GRECC) and the HPT rotates within the VA facility to other required clinical experiences outside of the special program, it is expected that another HPT in the same profession's training program will rotate into the special program. In this way, there will always be a HPT rotating in the special program. In some situations, a VA rotation that may meet accreditation guidelines may not be available (e.g., a pediatric rotation). Training outside of VA may not exceed one-sixth of the HPT's clinical education hours on an annual basis. Affiliation agreements (VA Form 10-0094h) between VA and a non-VA agency/facility/program must be established before an off-site rotation may occur. Many VA programs offer a 1:1 HPT WOC exchange with a local accredited training program, which provides a brief exposure to VA and maintains the total number of HPTs in both the VA and the non-VA accredited program while expanding training opportunities.

4. ACTION

a. A list of the "Education Programs Eligible for HPT Funding Support" is provided in Attachment A.

b. The entire report will be entered on-line in a web-based system developed by OAA (See Attachment B for Instructions).

c. **Reminders:**

  1) **Medical and Dental Resident and Advanced Fellowship (including Psychosocial Rehabilitation and MIRECC)** requests must **not** be included in this report.

2) **Podiatry residency positions for the six Phase I disbursement residency programs will *not* enter position requests in the database but will need to complete and upload an SoE (Northport, Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, Temple, West Haven).**

3) **OAA should be notified immediately of unfilled positions to ensure that positions may be temporarily reallocated to other facilities. In February 2017, a new database, AH and Nursing Field Filled Positions was released, which is the mechanism to alert OAA when a stipend is not used to make temporary reassignments.** Failure to notify OAA of unfilled positions in a timely manner may be considered in future allocations cycles. Failure to fill all positions will generally not be a negative factor in future allocations unless specific facilities have recurring unfilled positions. The positions are considered national assets for the specific discipline and all reallocations of unfilled positions should be made by OAA in collaboration with the profession's national program office.

4) Unfilled positions may not be reassigned to another profession at the facility. **The positions must be returned to OAA for reassignment using OAA's AH and Nursing Field Filled Positions Database. Similarly, unused funds must be returned through OAA's quarterly needs and excess report.** Almost all training programs will have difficulty filling all funded positions occasionally. Only an ongoing inability to fill HPT positions in a specific category will affect future allocations. Returning funds on the quarterly needs and excess report in lieu of notifying OAA through the fill rate database to withdraw funds for unfilled positions is not considered adequate notification. NOTE: Failure to report open positions may affect future allocations.

5. ATTACHMENTS

a. Attachment A. Education Programs Eligible for HPT Funding Support with Updated Position Titles

b. Attachment B. Instructions for Completing the HPT Request Forms and the Standards of Excellence

6. OAA PROGRAM CONTACTS

Any questions concerning this program announcement or the process for requesting **AHE** positions should be directed to the AHE team at Assoc.Health@va.gov.

Questions concerning the process for requesting Nursing trainee positions should be directed to the Nursing Education team at VHACOOAANURSING@va.gov .

ATTACHMENT A

EDUCATION PROGRAMS ELIGIBLE FOR HPT FUNDING SUPPORT WITH UPDATED POSITION TITLE

Profession	OAA Funded Educational Level	Updated Position Title in OAA Support Center
Audiology **(SoE required)**	Pre-degree doctoral externship – 4th year	Audiologist Doctoral Extern
Blind Rehabilitation **(SoE required)**	Pre-degree Masters internship at VA blind rehabilitation centers, low vision outpatient clinics, or with blind rehabilitation outpatient specialists (BROS).	Blind Rehabilitation Masters Intern
Chiropractic Care	Post-doctoral Residency	Chiropractor Resident
Clinical Pastoral Education (Chaplain) **(recompete RFP)**	Post-degree Residency- Only at VA programs accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)	Chaplain Resident Yr 1 and 2
Licensed Professional Mental Health Counseling (LPMHC)	Pre-degree master's internship	LPMHC Masters Intern
Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT)	Pre-degree master's internship	MFT Masters Intern
Nutrition and Food Service (Dietetics) **(SoE required)**	Post-Baccalaureate and Combined Master's. Priority will be given to programs accredited in the name of the VA or in which VA is a major participant.	1. Nutritionist/Dietician Post Bacc Intern 2. Nutritionist/Dietician Masters Intern 3. Nutritionist/Dietician Fellow
Nursing	Post-Baccalaureate Registered Nurse Residents, Post-Graduate Nurse Practitioner Residents, Nurse Anesthesia Student Trainees	Updated HR Codes for majority of nursing trainee positions
Occupational Therapy **(SoE required)**	Pre-degree master's or doctoral intern, Post-masters fellowship	1. Occupational Therapist Masters Intern 2. Occupational Therapist Fellow
Optometry **(SoE required)**	Postdoctoral Residency;	1. Optometry Resident 2. Optometry Fellow

Profession	OAA Funded Educational Level	Updated Position Title in OAA Support Center
	Post Residency Fellow (Boston only)	
Prosthetics/Orthotics **(recompete RFP)**	Post-masters Residency	Orthotist/Prosthetist Resident
Pharmacy **(SoE required)**	Postdoctoral Residency and Fellowship	1. Pharmacy Resident 2. Pharmacy Fellow
Physical Therapy	Pre-degree doctoral internship, Postdoctoral Residency	1. Physical Therapist Doctoral Intern 2. Physical Therapist Resident
Physician Assistant	Post-Masters Residency	Physician Assistant Resident
Podiatry **(SOE required)**	Postdoctoral Residency	Podiatry Resident Yr 1, 2, 3
Psychology	Pre-degree Doctoral Internship; Postdoctoral Residency	1. Psychologist Doctoral Intern 2. Psychologist Resident 3. Psychologist Resident Yr 1 and 2* (*neuropsychology and rehabilitation psychology are two-year programs)
Social Work **(SoE required)**	Pre-degree master's Internship (2nd year only), Post-Masters and Predoctoral Fellowship	1. Social Worker Masters Intern 2. Social Worker Fellow
Speech-Language Pathology **(SoE required)**	Pre-degree master's Internship, Post-masters Clinical Fellowship	1. Speech Pathologist Masters Intern 2. Speech Pathologist Fellow

ATTACHMENT B

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING HPT REQUESTS
AND THE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE FORMS

NOTE: MEDICAL/DENTAL, AND ADVANCED FELLOWSHIP POSITIONS ARE *NOT* INCLUDED IN THIS PROCESS.
Podiatry residency positions for the six Phase I disbursement residency programs will *not* enter position requests in the database but will need to complete and upload an SoE (Northport, Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, Temple, West Haven).

1. The facility Education Office, Designated Education Officer (DEO), or person designated by the facility Director should send copies of the Program Announcement and Attachments to each clinical education coordinator or training director in disciplines that are eligible to apply for funding and require completion of a Standards of Excellence (SoE) form. It is critical for facilities to review Attachment A, as nine professions' program offices will not require SoE submission. In these cases, it is recommended that the current distribution of stipends be maintained nationally except when the profession is recompeting positions through an RFP process (CPE, Orthotics/Prosthetics) or there are other extenuating circumstances (i.e., supervision or accreditation issues).

2. The facility Education Office, DEO, or person designated by the facility Director should enter requests on-line in the OAA web-based Support Center **by Friday, September 18, 2020**. To access the OAA Support Center please follow the steps below:
- Enter http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov into your website browser
- Select <Log In now>. If you are a first-time user, select <Register>. **It is strongly recommended that the DEO/Education Administrative Officer at your facility, who already has Support Center access, be the focal point for completing this report. It should not be necessary to have multiple individuals applying for access to OAA's Support Center**.

Submitting HPT Requests: Trainee Support in Associated Health and Nursing Professions (and SOE Uploads) Database

The default (when requesting HPT allocations) will be <group by program>, but an option to <group by discipline> is also available. You may alternate to each grouping by selecting the green and blue tabs above the grid. When entering new requests, you may use either option. <Group by program> separates positions by special initiative (e.g. GRECC, Mental Health, Regular) while <Group by discipline> separates positions by discipline and reflects the program type for each row within a single discipline. If you fail to request positions for any program and/or discipline **where a SoE is required,** you will not receive allocations for those positions. Base positions in AY 2021-22 for chiropractic care, licensed professional mental health counseling, marriage and family therapy, nursing, physician assistant, physical therapy, psychology will remain the same as the current 2020-21 approved base positions. These positions have been pre-approved, and facilities will not have the ability to edit the number of requested positions, as pre-approved rows in the database will be locked. Facilities that were temporarily reallocated positions in AY 2020-21 will **not** maintain those additional positions in subsequent years (only base positions are pre-approved).

In addition, two professions (Clinical Pastoral Education and Orthotics/Prosthetics) are currently recompeting for the existing funded residency positions through OAA's Request for Proposal processes. Thus, positions in those two professions will be hidden, and you will not be able to add new position requests.   OAA will enter awarded positions in the database when award decisions are made.

As of Academic Year 2019-20, Physician Assistant Masters Intern programs are **no longer funded** as OAA and national program office chose to reallocate those funds to expand PA Residency positions. You will not be able to request any pre-degree PA positions.

1. Once you have logged into the Support Center, select the Database heading at the top of the screen and select <enter> next to **<Trainee Support in Associated Health and Nursing Professions (and SoE Uploads)>.**

2. The specialties and the number of base allocations that your facility was allocated in AY 2020-21 will appear under the AY 2021-22 Base column. Your requests for AY 2021-22 have been pre-populated for you with the AY 2020-21 number of approved base positions at your facility (see Requested number of trainees column in tan). **If you do not adjust these numbers in the "Requested number of trainees AY 2021-22" column, it is assumed that you wish to maintain the same numbers for the upcoming year. Each education office must speak directly with facility training directors requesting positions to ensure requests reflect each discipline's expectations. For professions that also require listing requested positions in the SoE forms, it is critical that the number of requested positions in this database match the requests identified in the SoE form.**

3. To adjust requested hours and/or positions click on the <EDIT> pencil (first column) for each existing record you wish to revise that has not yet been pre-approved. After updating the information, a green check will appear when changes have been updated successfully. You may reset the checkmark by clicking directly on it.

4. If you wish to add a new row with a profession not yet identified on your grid, select <Add a New Entry Below> (at top above grid). Similarly, if within a profession, an HPT may complete a training experience with a different number of hours, then each number of hours should be specified in a separate row/record. Please keep in mind stipends must not be split between multiple HPTs (e.g. Physical Therapy may have one row/record for HPTs at 400 hours and one row/record for HPTs at 600 hours). Only professions that require an SoE this year will be available on the drop-down menu.

5. After all requests are entered for your facility and all required SoE uploads are complete (see instructions on next page) select <Confirm Complete> in green at the top of the page. A "Completion of Database" screen will appear, and you must check the red box indicating <Mark Completed Now> to notify OAA you have finished both the trainee request and SoE upload processes (see screenshot on next page).

Completion of Database
AH Standards of Excellence Upload Completed Forms 2014
for
Columbia VAMC (SC)

☐ Check if you have NO DATA to Enter (negative report)

[Mark Completed Now] [Return to Previous]

I have reviewed and updated the data for database
AH Standards of Excellence Upload Completed Forms 2014
and it is complete as of today,
8/18/2014 .

Please Rate this Database. 5 Stars being the Best.

Interface Ease of Use
☆☆☆☆☆

Interface Understandability
☆☆☆☆☆

Overall User Experience
☆☆☆☆☆

Standards of Excellence

1. Each coordinator or profession-specific training director requesting funding from each facility should complete the appropriate profession-specific **SoE in Clinical and Interprofessional Education and Training, except for requests from the 9 professions identified on page 1**. *Please do not complete this form for professions that do not request funding for HPTs where they may be appointed without compensation (exception for six Phase I Podiatry disbursement sites that must also complete SoE).* All SoE forms may be accessed independently by training directors, as the support center report does not require registration. The following link may be distributed to facility training directors and leaders: Link to reports on OAA Intranet Site. Each education office is asked to submit the completed SoE reports electronically (see instructions below).

2. The Program Coordinator, facility Education Office, Designated Education Officer, or person designated by the facility Director should upload all the completed SoE forms. Please submit your SoE on-line by **Friday, September 18, 2020**. To access the OAA Support Center, follow the instructions above.

3. Once you have logged into the Data Support Center, you will upload SoE forms in the same Database where HPT positions were requested, titled **"Trainee Support for Associated Health and Nursing Professions (and SoE Uploads)."**

4. On the home screen, select <SoE Upload Utility> on the top navigation tab. To view forms from previous years you may select <SoE Past Uploads> and select the AY you wish to review. Please follow the steps below to upload your profession-specific SoE forms for audiology, blind rehabilitation, dietetics, occupational therapy, optometry, pharmacy, podiatry, social work, and speech pathology.

Steps	Action
Step 1	Select *one* clinical profession for which site is requesting positions from the drop-down list provided. Only professions with required SoE forms will appear.

Step 2	After selecting the profession, the prefix will appear as [Profession]Standard_, and you must add a suffix (e.g. "Dietetics_Core", "Optometry_Accreditation") to allow program offices to identify your documents efficiently. You may choose your suffix based on the content you are uploading, and each upload must include a suffix.
Step 3	The document will be uploaded by clicking<browse> and selecting the appropriate file. Only **one** document may be selected for each entry. Since some professions request multiple documents, the suffix for the document title must be used to differentiate the file content.
Step 4	Select <Upload Document>
Step 5	Complete Step 1 – 4 until all required forms for professions requesting funding are submitted
Step 6	If you are completing uploads after entering your allocation requests, ensure you select <confirm complete> (described on page 7-8). If you have not entered requested positions complete this before selecting <confirm complete.> You may return to the HPT allocation request screen by selecting <home> on the top navigation tab.

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