

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
Office of Academic Affiliations (14AA)
Washington, DC**

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-23 (FISCAL YEAR 2023) HEALTH PROFESSION TRAINEE SUPPORT FOR ASSOCIATED HEALTH 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) health profession trainee (HPT) requests to the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) for Academic Year (AY) 2022-23 (Fiscal Year 2023). AHE HPTs are processed via this program announcement.

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 17, 2021**. This link will direct to you the [OAA Support Center](#) (see instructions in Appendix B). **Please read through this entire announcement before responding to this request.**

Five national program offices will have an 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 2022-23.

Twelve professions' program offices will not require SoE submission. In these cases, it is recommended that the current distribution of base allocations be maintained nationally except when there are other extenuating circumstances (i.e., supervision or accreditation issues...) **Beginning AY 22-23, the SoE is no longer required for nursing positions.**

SoE and position requests are not needed for the following twelve AHE professions:

- **Audiology**
- **Chiropractic Care**
- **Clinical Pastoral Education**
- **Licensed Professional Mental Health Counseling**
- **Marriage and Family Therapy**
- **Occupational Therapy**
- **Orthotics/Prosthetics**
- **Physician Assistants**
- **Psychology**
- **Registered Dietitian Nutrition**
- **Social Work**
- **Speech Language Pathology**

b. **SurveyMonkey Request for Information:** OAA's AHE section is 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. These

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 twelve professions identified above that will not complete an SoE or position request this year.

[SurveyMonkey link](#)

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 2020-21)?
- 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 2020-21)?
- 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 allocations.

d. **Funding Notification:** Decisions regarding funding support for HPTs will be communicated to VA facilities and Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISNs) on or about early **December2021 (date is subject to change)**.

2. GENERAL BACKGROUND

a. Funding for AHE 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 program training/site director, faculty, and material resources) support excellence in clinical education and training.
- 3) Each profession must have a VA program 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 paid 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 HPTs **must** be US citizens. No waivers will be granted based on inability to recruit citizens.
- c) Where professions with 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) VA-paid allocations rates are established by OAA, based on analyses of comparable private sector rates and federal locality adjustments. VA-paid allocations rates **must not** be adjusted or supplemented locally. See [Local Based Rates](#) for rates by VA facility.
- f) VA-paid allocations **must not** be split between two HPTs.
- g) AHE HPTs should be appointed using the following guidance: [Associated Health](#). Collaborating with your HR and education office is critical to ensure appropriate HPT appointments.
- h) A completed “AY 2022-23 Profession-Specific SoE in Clinical and Interprofessional Education/Training” **must** be submitted for each profession requesting funded positions (**see Section 1a for listing of twelve 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 when applicable.
- OAA is redistributing pre-degree OT and PT funds to the post-degree OT fellowship and PT residency levels. Each VA facility awarded a new OT fellowship and/or PT residency program through Phase I will have all of their pre-degree stipends in that respective profession converted to the post-degree level in academic year 2022-23. Your facility is still encouraged to train pre-degree HPTs without compensation, which is aligned with community practice.
 - Pharmacy programs are required to submit their American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) accreditation letter in the support center for verification.

- Each VA Facility that has a podiatry program participating in the disbursement process will enter base allocation requests when OAA's Medical and Dental section opens their base allocations 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.
- If HPTs are identified on the allocation plan as being funded through a special program (e.g., GRECC, Mental Health) 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 an HPT rotating in the special program.

4. ACTION

- a. A list of the "Education Programs Eligible for HPT Funding Support" is provided in Appendix A.
- b. The entire report will be entered online in a web-based system developed by OAA (See Appendix B for Instructions).
- c. **Reminders:**
 - 1) Podiatry residency positions for the ten Phase I & II disbursement residency programs will *not* enter position requests or SoEs in the database (Buffalo, Cleveland, Greater Los Angeles, Hines, Northport, Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, Temple, West Haven). Additional information on the allocations process to follow will be forthcoming (the process will be aligned with the Medical and Dental section). VA facilities interested in beginning the disbursement process for their Podiatry residency program in AY 2022-23 must contact the AHE section at assoc.health@va.gov before moving forward with the allocations process. If you expressed interest on a recent request for information on this topic you will be receiving correspondence from AHE directly.
 - 2) **OAA should be notified immediately of unfilled positions to ensure that positions may be temporarily reallocated to other facilities.** 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 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. Appendix A. Education Programs Eligible for HPT Funding Support with Updated Position Titles
- b. Appendix 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.

APPENDIX A

EDUCATION PROGRAMS ELIGIBLE FOR HPT FUNDING SUPPORT WITH POSITION TITLE

Profession	OAA Funded Educational Level 2022-23	Position Title in OAA Support Center
Audiology	Pre-degree doctoral externship – 4 th 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)	Post-degree Residency	Chaplain Resident Yr. 1, 2 and 3
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 (Registered Dietetic Nutritionist)	Post-Baccalaureate and Combined Master's.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registered Dietetic Nutritionist Post Bacc Intern 2. Registered Dietetic Nutritionist Masters Intern 3. Registered Dietetic Nutritionist Fellow
Occupational Therapy (OT Fellowship RFP)	Pre-degree master's or doctoral intern, Post-masters fellowship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Occupational Therapist Masters Intern 2. Occupational Therapist Fellow
Optometry (SoE required)	Postdoctoral Residency; Post Residency Fellow (Boston only)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Optometry Resident 2. Optometry Fellow
Prosthetics/Orthotics	Post-masters Residency	Orthotist/Prosthetist Resident

Profession	OAA Funded Educational Level 2022-23	Position Title in OAA Support Center
Pharmacy (SoE required)	Postdoctoral Residency and Fellowship	1. Pharmacy Resident 2. Pharmacy Fellow
Physical Therapy (SOE required-only existing accredited programs; PT Residency RFP)	Postdoctoral Residency	Physical Therapist Resident
Physician Assistant	Post-Masters Residency	Physician Assistant Resident
Podiatry (SOE required; only non-disbursement programs)	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	Pre-degree master's Internship (2 nd year only), Post-Masters and Predoctoral Fellowship	1. Social Worker Masters Intern 2. Social Worker Fellow
Speech-Language Pathology	Pre-degree master's Internship, Post-masters Clinical Fellowship	1. Speech Pathologist Masters Intern 2. Speech Pathologist Fellow

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING HPT REQUESTS AND THE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE FORMS

NOTE: MEDICAL/DENTAL, ADVANCED FELLOWSHIP, AND NURSING POSITIONS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS PROCESS.

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 professions that are eligible to apply for funding and require completion of a Standards of Excellence (SoE) form. It is critical for facilities to review Appendix A, as twelve professions' program offices will not require SoE submission. In these cases, it is recommended that the current distribution of base allocations be maintained nationally except when 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 17, 2021**. To access the OAA Support Center please follow the steps below:
 - Enter <https://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 Professions (and SOE Uploads) Database

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 Professions (and SoE Uploads)>.ol> - a. The default (when requesting HPT allocations) will be <group by program>, but an option to <group by profession> is also available. You may alternate to each grouping by selecting the green tab 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 profession> separates positions by profession and reflects the program type for each row within a single profession. *NOTE: If you fail to request positions for any program and/or profession **where a SoE is required**, you will not receive allocations for those positions.*
2. The specialties and the number of base allocations that your facility was allocated in AY 2021-22 will appear under the AY 2022-23 Base column (see Requested number of trainees column in tan). **If you do not adjust these numbers in the "Requested number of trainees AY 2022-23" column, it is assumed that you wish to maintain the same numbers for the upcoming year. For professions that require the SoE forms, the number of requested positions in this database must match the requests identified in the SoE form.** To adjust requested hours and/or positions click on the <EDIT> pencil (first column) for each existing record you wish to revise. After updating the information, a green check will appear when changes have been updated successfully.

- If you wish to add a new profession not yet identified on your grid, that is requiring an SoE, 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. Blind Rehab may have one row/record for HPTs at 400 hours and one row/record for HPTs at 600 hours).
- 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 HPTrequest and SoE upload processes (see screenshot below).

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

- 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**. Each education office is asked to submit the completed SoE reports electronically (see instructions below). Link to reports on OAA [Intranet Site](#)
- 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 17, 2021**. To access the OAA Support Center, follow the instructions above.
- You will upload SoE forms in the same Database where HPT positions were requested, titled **“Trainee Support for Associated Health Professions (and SoE Uploads).”**
- 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 Blind Rehab, Optometry, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, and Podiatry.

Steps	Action
Step 1	Select one clinical profession 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<choose file> 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	If you are completing uploads after entering your allocation requests, ensure you select <confirm complete> (described on page 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.