

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT
VA ADVANCED FELLOWSHIP IN HEALTH PROFESSIONS
EDUCATION, EVALUATION, AND RESEARCH

1. PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

This program announcement provides information, policies, and application procedures to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities/systems regarding the VHA Advanced Fellowship in Health Professions Education, Evaluation, and Research (HPEER), a training program supported by the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA). HPEER is designed to develop experts to advance healthcare education through practice, inquiry, and improvement. VHA facilities committed to advancing health professions education are encouraged to apply for the establishment or renewal of this program at their site.

The expected result of this announcement is the selection of up to six sites approved to recruit up to two fellows per year for this 2-year educational experience. *Existing Health Professions Education, Evaluation, and Research sites need to re-apply* and those that are re-approved will be authorized to continue training and recruitment without interruption. New sites are expected to onboard fellows for Academic Year (AY) 2022-23 but are authorized to recruit and onboard fellows for AY 2021-22 if they have the capacity to do so.

2. BACKGROUND

The education of interprofessional health care professionals has been challenged by the demands of the rapidly changing healthcare delivery system. There is an acute need for experts trained in educational evaluation and research to assess and improve the process, outcomes, and impact of health professions educational programs and the interaction between the education programs and their clinical settings. New leadership must be developed to lead evidence-based transformation of healthcare education, which will in turn drive the improvement in health care service delivery.

The VHA oversees the largest health professions education enterprise in the country, providing over 124,000 trainees with supervised clinical education in VHA medical centers through programs sponsored by VHA and in partnership with academic affiliates (e.g., schools of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and other professions). Beginning in 1946, VHA has played a major role in developing the next generation of health care providers for VHA and for the Nation. In 2014, VHA recently initiated a formal program to train advanced fellows in rigorous evaluation and research related to education program processes, outcomes, and impact, with the piloting of four HPEER sites. These sites provided opportunities for experiential learning, individualized mentoring, and provision of local instruction related to health professions education. However, the current sites have not had significant coordination around a common curriculum. In June of 2020, a Coordinating Center was selected for the HPEER program

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through a competitive process. The newly appointed HPEER Coordinating Center, housed in Houston, TX, is a joint endeavor between VHA facilities in Houston, TX and White River Junction, VT.

The Coordinating Center will serve as a resource to the HPEER local sites determined through this program announcement and is responsible for coordination of national-level engagement. In partnership with the sites, the Coordinating Center will refine the high-level program competencies and learning objectives drafted by the Coordinating Center and outlined in Table 1. These will be used to develop and implement a national curriculum.. This curriculum will be designed so that local instruction can be integrated with national instruction, allowing sites to develop additional curriculum content to leverage local expertise in health professions education and/or individual fellows' program goals.

The Coordinating Center will also oversee the creation and implementation of a national-level program evaluation, including assessment of fellows' satisfaction with the program, their subsequent employment, recruitment to VHA, success in obtaining research funding, publication in peer-reviewed journals, awards, and continued work in the field of health professions education, evaluation, and research. These data will be aggregated across sites to identify overall program improvement needs and be reported to OAA. Such data will be considered in evaluation of participating sites at the time of future program re-competition.

3. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Facility Resources and Leadership Commitment

Program Sites must be located at VHA facilities that demonstrate clear facility leadership commitment to provide adequate support for a successful program. Specific facility support requirements are listed in the proposal [scoring table](#) in section 5C and in the application instructions in [Attachment B](#), which also outlines the minimum commitment for support required for the Facility Director.

B. Learning Environment and Educational Resources

In order to ensure successful implementation, programs must be in facilities with robust interprofessional educational learning environments and enough educational resources and expertise to support fellow development as leaders and experts in health professions

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education. Applications should describe facility characteristics that indicate the presence of a strong learning environment including:

- i.** The overall facility training infrastructure (e.g., relevant training programs, continuing education for existing faculty, and facility sponsored educational experiences, conferences or award opportunities).
- ii.** Specific health professions education programs, opportunities, and collaborations. This may include:
 - Facility involvement and support of projects or initiatives related to health professions education at the local, VISN or national level
 - Facility collaboration with professional organizations or VHA entities (e.g., national program offices, Centers of Excellence) that can enhance the fellowship experience
 - Any focused areas of expertise related to health profession education, evaluation and/or research within the facility
- iii.** The quality of the established clinical learning environment at the facility, as evidenced by factors such as:
 - The quality of care in clinical settings in which the facility's health professions education programs are embedded. Standard national VA metrics or locally defined metrics can be provided
 - Participation of the facility's health profession trainees in clinical performance improvement activities
 - Description of how HPEER advanced fellows will be meaningfully engaged with the local clinical learning environment (e.g., co-location, attendance at team meetings, teaching, evaluation, or other strategies)
- iv.** Affiliation with an academic institution, specifically:
 - Fellowship sites are encouraged to have affiliations with appropriate programs for associated health disciplines recruited as fellows (including schools of nursing, pharmacy, psychology and others)
 - Applications should describe any partnerships with academic education evaluation and education research programs at the affiliate and outline the type of resources and opportunities such affiliations will bring

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- Access to a Master's program with local affiliates is encouraged. The application should describe any opportunities and plans for incorporating such degrees, including a description of the proposed strategy for funding (note that appropriated VHA funds generally cannot be used to fund tuition for such degrees)

The educational environment and resources should be described, using the criteria in row 2 of the scoring criteria in section 5C as a guide

C. Interprofessional Program Directors and Faculty

Interprofessional, highly qualified leadership and faculty mentorship are essential to developing and maintaining a strong training program. The program is required to have a designated Director *with at least 20% paid VHA time* (through a staff position, Intergovernmental Personnel Act agreement or contract) to administer the program. Having Co-Directors may be advantageous, but this is a local decision, based on specific needs. Program Co-Directors must have combined VHA paid effort of at least 20%. Site Directors or Co-Directors shall:

- i. Possess expertise in education evaluation and research as well as expertise in the practice of interprofessional education and the ability to identify additional preceptors, mentors, and other resource faculty at each site.
 - The program must demonstrate that the fellow will be exposed to a mentoring team that addresses the multifaceted training needs for this fellowship experience
 - Sites are encouraged to identify diverse and interprofessional faculty.
 - Faculty are expected to meet regularly with the fellows to assess their progress, serve as role models, and provide constructive feedback and assistance in meeting educational goals
 - Faculty are expected to participate in formative and summative evaluation of fellows and the fellowship program.
 - Ongoing faculty development programming is desirable

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- a. Ensure that assistance with projects, research methodology and content, and guidance in personal and professional development are available to fellows through an individualized combination of director and mentor support
- b. Describe a commitment to active, collaborative engagement with other HPEER sites, the HPEER Coordinating Center, and OAA in support of the overall fellowship, including curricular and evaluation development and implementation

Programs should provide details about program directors and faculty as instructed in [Attachment B](#) and with regard to the criteria in row 3 of the [scoring table](#) in section 5C.

D. Curriculum and Instruction

In responding to this program announcement, applicant sites are asked to outline their educational proposal for delivering local fellow curriculum beyond what is proposed for the national program, based on local expertise and resources. Such a description shall be provided in the context of a cited educational framework or theoretical model. This local curriculum should be based on expertise and resources available at the program site (e.g., simulation, faculty development, educational research, etc.). When developing their proposed local curriculum, applicant sites shall consider the proposed national learning objectives provided in Table 1, with the understanding that selected sites will partner with the Coordinating Center in the further development and finalization of national level competencies. It is expected that selected sites will also further develop their proposed local educational plan in partnership with the coordinating center, with the eventual outcome being a local education plan that aligns with the finalized national curricular competencies, reinforces national instruction, and supports fellow's achievement of national HPEER learning objectives.

- i. The local curriculum should include:
 - brief description of learning objectives
 - brief description of proposed instructional strategies, including:

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- a. formal instruction
 - b. experiential learning
 - c. learning through reflection
 - d. mentorship
- description of interprofessional opportunities for trainees to be exposed to topics relevant to their individual learning goals
 - description of the process for developing an Individualized Learning Plan (IDP) in collaboration with their Program Director(s) and mentoring team, as soon as practical on entering the program. This plan will include:
 - a. the fellow's long-term goals
 - b. the local resources to be used
 - c. plan to periodically review and modify as indicated
- ii. A plan for evaluation of fellows' achievement of curricular goals and learning objectives, including specific outcomes. This should include assessment during the fellowship and at completion.
 - iii. Fellows are expected to develop and implement a portfolio of educational projects with at least one significant activity or project that will result in a documented impact on VHA educational priorities, operations or clinical care. This significant research or evaluation project should (a) be focused on a local, VISN, or national health professions education program or initiative within VHA and (b) result in presentation at a regional or national venue, scholarly publication, development and dissemination of practical products, or all three.

Programs should provide detail about the plans for curriculum and instruction as outlined in the [scoring table](#) in section 5C (row 4).

- E. Program Administration, Evaluation and Improvement Plan**
 - i. Program Administration

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- Programs must have procedures and resources for successful ongoing administration of the program
 - Applications should specify and describe the administrative home of the fellowship (e.g., research or clinical center, education office, etc.) and the processes by which the site will monitor and ensure successful program administration
 - Specific requirements for facility-level administration are listed in the instructions for the Facility Director's letter of support in Attachment B. Policies for program administration are listed in Attachment A
- ii. Program Evaluation and Improvement**
- Applicant programs must have systematic processes for evaluating effectiveness in meeting educational goals. Programs should also have systematic processes for utilizing evaluation data to drive continual program improvement
 - Programs must agree to partner with the Coordinating Center in the development and implementation of both local and national program evaluation and improvement processes. Applications should describe a plan to monitor processes and outcomes of the program that includes:
 - a.** Assessing fellow outcomes and achievement during training (e.g. learning goals, competencies, scholarly activities and products)
 - b.** Conducting programmatic evaluation of the fellowship including processes, outcomes, and fellow and faculty satisfaction
 - c.** Assessing post-fellowship outcomes (e.g., employment, retention in VHA, continued work in healthcare education, impact on health professions education, scholarly activities and products)
 - d.** Applying assessment and evaluation results to modify and improve the local fellowship program
 - e.** Submitting annual reports to the Coordinating Center to be aggregated across sites to identify overall program improvement needs
 - Applicant programs shall outline their strategies for recruitment of fellows (see Attachment A for fellow eligibility). This shall include likely professions targeted, the methods for recruitment, and strategies to develop a diverse and inclusive training program.

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Row 5 of the [scoring table](#) should be used as a guide for this section.

F. Potential for Impact on VHA and Veterans Health

Programs shall describe anticipated impacts of their fellowship program on the VHA mission (e.g., improvements in the education of VHA trainees or the VHA educational enterprise, interaction of health professions with clinical care, service delivery, or health care systems, and the development and recruitment of health professionals who can meet current and future health care needs of VHA).

This section is addressed in row 6 of the [scoring table](#)

4. FELLOW CREDENTIALS, APPOINTMENT, PAY, AND OTHER PROGRAM POLICIES

Selected programs will be governed by the policies outlined in [Attachment A](#) regarding pay, appointments, program oversight, and all other policies specified in the attachment.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

- A.** Proposals will be reviewed for the presence of minimum eligibility criteria related to facility support of the program as documented in the Facility Director's Letter of Support. The specific criteria and details of how to document them in the Facility Director's Letter can be found in [Attachment B](#).
- B.** Applications that meet basic eligibility requirements will be evaluated by a formal review process. An interprofessional ad hoc review committee consisting of reviewers with demonstrated expertise and leadership in their respective medical and health professions content area, and/or clinical education will be designated by the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer. The review committee will advise the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer about the merits of the applications. Decision to approve sites rests with the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer.

C. Training site applications will be scored using the following criteria and weights:

**** IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR CURRENTLY APPROVED SITES REAPPLYING****

Scoring for currently approved program sites will be based, in part, on past performance. Please see Attachment B for instructions for documenting this.

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Scoring Criteria for Submitted Proposals	Maximum points awarded
<p>1. Facility Resources and Leadership Commitment beyond minimum eligibility requirements</p> <p>Once the qualifying criteria outlined in the Facility Letter of Support instructions are met, an additional 5 points can be awarded for resources and commitment <u>above</u> the minimum for eligibility. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced support of fellowship faculty (e.g., faculty development opportunities, additional faculty resources, protected time beyond the minimum required) • Additional resources for fellows (e.g., facility sponsored education, travel or project funds) 	5
<p>2. Learning Environment and Educational Resources</p> <p>Quality of the interprofessional learning environment, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility infrastructure and training programs that support health professions education for fellows and faculty • Collaboration with other VHA facilities and/or professional organizations in health professions education • A high-quality, established clinical care environment in which fellows will train, and a plan to meaningfully connect fellows to the local clinical setting • Facility involvement in projects or initiatives related to health professions education at the local, VISN or national level and/or • collaborations with VHA national program offices or Centers that can enhance the fellowship experience • Academic affiliation(s) that support the program, including the health profession(s) covered 	20

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<p>3. Interprofessional Directors and Faculty</p> <p>Evaluation of Fellowship Program Co-Directors and Faculty qualifications should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training, expertise, and scholarship in health professions education evaluation and/or research • Demonstrated ability to teach across disciplines and promote an interprofessional culture • Commitment to mentorship through regular meetings with fellows to support scholarly and professional development 	20
<p>4. Curriculum and Instruction</p> <p>Quality of local educational program’s proposed local curriculum plan that is guided by an educational framework or theoretical model and maximizes interprofessional learning in local areas of educational expertise. This plan shall include descriptions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment and plan to develop individualized learning programs with fellows • Experiential learning opportunities in health professions education • Mentored training opportunities related to both scholarship/research skills and professional development • Scholarly (project/work) opportunities and strategy to facilitate fellows in developing a portfolio of educational products including opportunities for fellow leadership of projects and dissemination via regional or national venues and/or publication • Plans for collaboration with academic affiliates on specific projects • Assessment of individual fellow’s achievement of curricular goals using specific outcome metrics 	30
<p>5. Program Administration, Evaluation and Improvement</p>	15

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<p>Processes for administration, evaluation and improvement of the fellowship program. Including the program’s ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully administer the fellowship program • Describe specific strategies for recruiting fellows, including efforts to recruit for diversity and inclusion • Develop and implement effective and meaningful local evaluation processes • Use assessment data for continual improvement • Partner with the Coordinating Center in completing the national evaluation and reporting requirements 	
<p>6. Potential for Impact on VHA and Veterans Health</p> <p>The anticipated impacts of the fellowship program on the VAH mission, including improving healthcare education, scholarship, clinical service delivery and/or filling needed positions.</p>	10
Total	100

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6. SCHEDULE

Thursday, November 5, 2020	OAA releases program announcement to eligible sites.
November 19, 2020	<p>Informational Session November 19, 2020, 1:30-2:30pm EST</p> <p>ZoomGov Meeting: Nov 17 HPEER RFP Information Session</p> <p>Meeting ID: 160 489 1908 Passcode: 261638</p> <p>One tap mobile</p> <p>+16692545252,,1604891908#,,,,,0#,,261638# US (San Jose)</p> <p>+16468287666,,1604891908#,,,,,0#,,261638# US (New York)</p> <p>Dial by your location</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">+1 669 254 5252 US (San Jose)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">+1 646 828 7666 US (New York)</p> <p>Find your local number: https://www.zoomgov.com/join/1604891908</p>
Wednesday, December 16, 2020	<p>Deadline for submission of non-binding letter of intent to OAA database:</p> <p>https://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/rfp/default.aspx?PID=1087</p>
February 17, 2021	<p>Site applications due to OAA. Upload to OAA database:</p> <p>https://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/rfp/default.aspx?PID=1087</p>
March 10, 2021	<p>Review committee reviews applications and makes recommendations for approval of fellowship sites to the Chief (or Acting Chief) Academic Affiliations Officer</p>

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March 31, 2021	OAA notifies facilities about the approval/disapproval of their applications
July, 2021	All sites begin collaboration with Coordinating Center focused on faculty development, piloting national instruction, and refining fellowship evaluation processes; re-selected sites are expected to onboard fellows; new sites are authorized to onboard fellows, but not required
July 2022	All sites are expected to onboard fellows. National and local instruction is fully implemented

7. OAA CONTACT PERSONS

For information or questions related to this fellowship program, please contact Ms. Deborah Ludke by email at deborah.ludke@va.gov or Dr. Joel Schmidt at joel.schmidt@va.gov.

8. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please see [Attachment B](#) for specific application instructions

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TABLE 1

Table 1. Houston VAMC HPEER Coordinating Center Proposed Learning Objectives for the National Curriculum, Organized by Competency

Learning Objectives
Competency: Health Professions Educational Leadership
Develop a personal leadership style Understand different leadership styles Demonstrate effective leadership skills Understand how to manage a team and stakeholders
Competency: Healthcare Improvement through Educational Practice
Demonstrate ability to connect theory to teaching strategy Understand training best practices Demonstrate understanding and application of best practices for curriculum development Demonstrate knowledge of principles of instructional design Understand best practices for developing training materials Understand how to use simulation strategies to engage learners
Competency: Interprofessional Practice in Health Professions Education
Understand methods of Interprofessional Education and Training Demonstrate teamwork in the context of interprofessional practice Understand best practices for effective teams and how effective teams work
Competency: Educational Assessment and Program Evaluation
Demonstrate knowledge and application of program evaluation frameworks Apply data utilization to enhance educational outcome
Competency: Educational Research
Understand and apply theory and study designs for educational research Demonstrate scholarship (i.e., manuscript writing and publishing, presenting) in educational research

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**ATTACHMENT A
FELLOW ELIGIBILITY, APPOINTMENT, PAY, AND OTHER PROGRAM POLICIES**

1. GOVERNANCE

The Office of Academic Affiliations maintains overall responsibility for the administration of the VHA Advanced Fellowship Program in Health Professions Education, Evaluation, and Research. The fellowship program is governed by VHA Handbook 1400.07, "Education of Advanced Fellows."

The Coordinating Center and OAA must approve significant changes to the fellowship site, including issues such as change in leadership, fellow resignation or termination, insufficient funding, change in preceptor/mentors, or any other reason why the approved proposal is not being fulfilled as proposed. The Coordinating Center will make recommendations to OAA about ongoing operations and future directions of the program.

2. FELLOW ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Fellows are to be prepared for career positions in educational leadership roles and as specialists responsible for education program evaluation and improvement. Fellows can be clinicians or non-clinical scientists. While it is likely that fellows will typically come from a health professions background, others with relevant backgrounds (e.g., graduate degree in education) interested in focusing on health professions education are also appropriate applicants.

Clinical applicants will be eligible to participate in this program provided they have completed all requirements needed to be a fully credentialed independent practitioner in their field at a VHA facility (with the exception of certain associated health disciplines that require fellowship training prior to licensure). Applicants from clinical disciplines requiring doctoral level education to qualify as an independent practitioner must possess the required degree (e.g., DDS, DPM, PhD, etc.). Clinical fields that recognize independent practitioners possessing degree levels below that of Master's degree (e.g., Registered Nurse or Registered Dietitian) *must have completed a Master's degree to be eligible for participation in this program.* Social workers and health care administrators must possess at least a Master's degree. Applicants who are in non-clinical associated health professions must possess at least a Master's degree (e.g., MHSA, MPH, etc.). Applicants who were doctorally prepared as a clinician but who have relinquished licensure and are not currently or planning to be clinically active in the future will

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be considered as post-doctoral non-clinician scientists. All applicants should demonstrate interest in pursuing a VHA career with Health Professions Education as a significant focus. Fellows are appointed for two years.

A. Physician Fellows

Prior to beginning the fellowship, physician fellows must meet the following criteria:

- i.** Completed a residency program that is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) or the Bureau of Professional Education (BPE) of the American Osteopathic Association.
- ii.** Fellows may not be enrolled simultaneously in any accredited physician residency/fellowship program without a specific waiver provided by OAA.
- iii.** Have active, full and unrestricted license(s) to practice in the U.S. and any of its territories.
- iv.** Be board certified or eligible with demonstration of active pursuit of board certification.
- v.** Be appropriately credentialed and privileged for clinical practice at the local VHA facility.
- vi.** Be a U.S. citizen or possess a current visa suitable for participation in this paid educational activity. U.S. citizens shall be given priority in selection.

B. Nurse Fellows

Prior to beginning the fellowship, nurse fellows must meet the following criteria:

- i.** Either
 - a.** Be enrolled in an accredited PhD or Doctorate of Nursing Practice Program, and have completed sufficient didactics to be able to fully participate in the experiential learning provided by this program or
 - b.** Completed a Master's or Doctoral Degree in Nursing from a recognized academic institution.
- ii.** Have a Nursing license (e.g., RN, NP) and either credentialed or boarded with a scope of practice consistent with their licensure and prior training. The license must be maintained throughout the fellowship to maintain eligibility for participation.
- iii.** Be a U.S. Citizen.

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C. Psychology Fellows

- i. Prior to beginning the fellowship, psychology fellows must meet the following criteria:
 - Possess an advanced degree from an accredited doctoral program that would make them eligible for VHA hire. Fellows can begin if the degree is not yet conferred if they have met all requirements (including dissertation defense) and it is in writing from the fellow's graduate program. Doctoral programs must be American Psychological Association (APA), Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) or Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS) accredited. The applicant's degree must be in a specific specialty area recognized by one of these accreditation bodies and meet VHA hiring eligibility requirements. **Note:** an applicant with a degree from a program accredited for a school psychology specialty is not eligible for the fellowship because this specialty is ineligible for VHA hire.
 - Be a U.S. Citizen.
 - Have completed all requirements to become a staff psychologist at a VHA facility, either as a licensed independent practitioner or as a graduate psychologist subject to supervision.
 - Graduate psychologists subject to supervision must meet the following additional requirements:
 - a. Completed an APA or CPA-accredited internship (or a new OAA funded, VHA-based internship that is not yet accredited).
 - b. If the candidate is enrolled but has not yet completed internship, the Director of Clinical Training at the candidate's graduate school and the Director of Training at the internship must submit a statement indicating that completion of all degree requirements is expected before the proposed start date of the fellowship.
 - c. The local program must develop a written supervision plan, starting on the first day of training. This plan must include at least 4 hours of supervision weekly, of which 2 hours must be individual, face-to-face supervision by a licensed and privileged psychologist. In addition, the written supervision agreement should meet jurisdictional requirements for licensure in any state.

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D. Associated Health Fellows (other than Psychology)

Prior to beginning the fellowship, associated health fellows must meet the following criteria:

- i. Possess an advanced degree from an accredited masters or doctoral program in their respective profession and meet the qualification standards that would make them eligible for VHA hire.
- ii. Have completed all requirements to become a fully credentialed independent practitioner (or the equivalent for that profession) at a VHA facility.
- iii. Have an active, unrestricted license to practice in the U.S., if such licenses are required for entry-level VHA employment in the candidate's profession.
- iv. Be a U.S. Citizen.
- v. Not be simultaneously enrolled in any other accredited clinical training program.
- vi. Chaplaincy Fellows must possess 4 units of accredited clinical pastoral education in addition to the above requirements.

E. Applicants who are in non-clinical associated health professions must possess at least a Master's degree (e.g., MHSA, MPH, M.Ed., etc.).

3. APPOINTMENT AND COMPENSATION

A. Physician Fellows

- i. Appointments will be made under 38 U.S.C. 7406.
- ii. Accepted candidates are identified for the personnel management data systems and for cost accounting purposes by specific assignment codes. Fellows are eligible for health and life insurance benefits.
- iii. The Office of Academic Affiliations will consider requests to appoint fellows through a disbursement agreement executed in collaboration with a VHA/OAA approved academic affiliate.
- iv. Stipend Rate. The stipend rate will be based on years of previously completed ACGME or AOA accredited residency training and equivalent experiences as determined by OAA and index rates approved at the affiliated university and the respective VHA facility. The appointment level cannot exceed PGY-8. OAA reserves the right to use a different mechanism to establish fellow pay rates in the future. Fellows shall be paid directly by the VHA facility unless OAA provides written approval for another payment mechanism.

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- v. Stipend Supplementation. Fellows shall not receive additional revenue from any source in compensation for their duties in this program. This prohibition does not include possible supplemental funding for travel or research, if available.

B. Nursing and Associated Health Fellows

- i. Appointments will be made under 38 U.S.C. 7405 (a)(1)(D).
- ii. Stipend rates will be determined by OAA, depending on the discipline and previous education of the trainee. Current rates are listed at <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/DBReports/LocBasedStipends.aspx> as of the time of publication of this document. Approved sites with potential fellows from disciplines not on the table should contact OAA for salary rates.

C. Full time appointments are preferred, but sites may request an exception to full time appointments by making a formal request to OAA and the Coordinating Center stipulating the part time appointment is not less than half-time and that such an appointment is appropriate for the program mission and the fellow's learning plan. All part time appointments must be completed during the fellowship appointment period.

D. Full-time fellows from clinical professions are expected to spend at least 80 percent of their time in training, development, and implementation of projects related to the practice and advancement of healthcare education. No more than 20 percent time should be spent in direct clinical care unless there is specific educational justification. Fellows may spend less than 20 percent in clinical activities, but such decisions must take into account each fellow's career plans including requirements for licensure (when applicable).

E. Educational Details. Fellows directly paid by VHA may be detailed to other educational institutions without loss of pay, but under no circumstances may the total time spent in non-VHA institutions exceed one-sixth of the total hours a fellow is in a pay and training status with VHA. Guidance on educational details for fellows is available in the VHA Handbook 1400.07 Education of Advanced Fellows. Advanced Fellows paid via disbursement cannot receive VHA pay for educational details away from Federal locations. Should a program wish to have fellows conduct clinical activities at non-VHA sites, prior written approval from the Office of Academic Affiliations must be obtained.

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OAA recognizes that not all facilities used for educational purposes may be on VHA property. This can complicate the typical determinations about VHA timekeeping for fellow's activities in this program. Sites intending to have activities occur at non-VHA or shared sites should contact OAA (VHACOOAAAdvancedFellowships@va.gov) for guidance about appointment and timekeeping strategies.

4. LIABILITY PROTECTION

Fellows will be protected from personal liability while providing professional services as a trainee at a VHA facility and at non-VHA facilities under the Federal Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act, 28 U.S.C. 2679(b)-(d). Training at non-VHA facilities can only take place under the terms of an approved affiliation agreement (please consult with OAA Advanced Fellowship section).

5. EXPENSES

Except as specified elsewhere in this program announcement, expenses connected to the fellows' recruitment, educational activities, or research are not funded under this program. Transportation to the VHA facility and housing arrangements are the sole responsibility of the selected fellows.

6. SERVICE OBLIGATION

There is no service obligation after completion of the fellowship program. However, fellows are encouraged to seek VHA employment. Program faculty mentorship is expected to include career counseling, including assistance in obtaining VHA employment.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF FELLOWSHIP STATUS

Fellows shall notify VHA locally and nationally as required prior to any publication or presentation. Fellows shall also identify their VHA support in all reports and presentations during the fellowship program and after the fellowship program if the report or presentation is related to activities conducted during the fellowship program. Failure to do so while in the fellowship program may result in termination of the fellowship. Fellow activities determined to be research per VA Program Guide 1200.21 must comply with local and national VA research policies and procedures.

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8. CLINICAL PRIVILEGES/ SCOPE OF PRACTICE

A. Physicians

- i.** Subject to the policies and procedures of the appointing institution's medical staff bylaws, Advanced Fellows are to be privileged as licensed independent practitioners (LIPs) in the primary medical specialty in which they completed approved training. Exceptions to this requirement for LIP privileging are rare and require written OAA approval. The assigned privileges as an independent practitioner shall be within the scope of practice for which the Advanced Fellow has been previously trained.
- ii.** A physician Advanced Fellow may NOT provide independent clinical services or clinical training for clinical skills that are part of the fellow's learning plan. Such physicians are under supervision (or dependent practitioners) for those skills.

B. Nursing and Associated Health Professionals

- i.** Shall either be:
 - a.** privileged as licensed independent practitioners or
 - b.** boarded with scope of practice consistent with their licensure and prior training or
 - c.** (for associated health disciplines that require fellowship training prior to licensure) appointed as a Health Professions Trainee and subject to supervision per VHA Handbook 1400.04
- ii.** Shall NOT provide independent clinical services or clinical training for clinical skills that are part of the fellow's learning plan. Such trainees are under supervision (or dependent practitioners) for those skills.

9. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- A.** OAA will provide funds to VHA facilities for fellows' stipends and fringe benefits.
- B.** Host facility. The host facility is required to provide protected time for program directors and faculty, local administrative support for program needs, learning resources, funding, and infrastructure as outlined in other sections of this announcement.

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ATTACHMENT B

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- A. Only one application per site can be submitted. Applications must be coordinated with all interested parties within a facility.
- B. Font size must be 11-point or larger. Margins must be one inch all around.
- C. For the full application, the total number of pages must not exceed 30. The core narrative should not exceed 20 pages.

Be sure to carefully review the **program** announcement and particularly the table with scoring criteria in section 5C. Those criteria will be the basis for scoring the proposal.

2. LETTER OF INTENT

- A. By Wednesday, December 16, 2020 interested sites are required to upload a Letter of Intent stating their non-binding intent to submit a full proposal. The letter needs to be uploaded to the OAA Support Center at: http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/rfp_general/default.aspx?PID=24
- B. Please click on the “Register” button to enter your information. Upon registering, you will be able to log in and start to upload the required document.
- C. The non-binding Letter of Intent should be addressed to the Advanced Fellowship Program Director, Office of Academic Affiliations and must include the following information:

- 1. Facility name
- 2. Single sentence indicating the intention to apply for the program
- 3. Name and email addresses of proposed program director(s) and others who should be contacted regarding the proposal status

No additional information is needed in this letter and the letter is not scored as part of the proposal. The letter must be signed by the facility Designated Education Officer (DEO). For VACO (non-facility) applications, the appropriate VACO Chief Program Officer should sign the letter.

3. FULL APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- A. Applications shall be uploaded to the OAA Support Center at: http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/rfp_general/default.aspx?PID=24

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- B.** Please click on the “Register” button to enter your information. Upon registering, you will be able to log in and upload the required documents. There are up to six (6) documents required for a complete application. You can upload one document at a time. Each of these required documents is described in Section C below.

Please use the following document titles and file names when uploading files:

Document A: **Facility Director Letter of Support**

Document B: **Core Narrative**

Document C: **Program Director and Faculty**

Document D: **Additional Letters of Support**

Document E: **Additional Appendices** (if desired)

Document F: **Progress Report** of Fellowship Program to date (for established programs only; see instructions below)

- C.** After all files have been uploaded, please select “Submit for Approval.” You will be taken to a screen that lists all documents that have been uploaded for your application. Please select “Submit Final Application to OAA” in order to submit your application.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS

A. Facility Director’s Letter of Support

- i.** To meet minimum eligibility requirements, the letter must specify how the facility will support all of the following items:
 - 1.** A total of at least 20% dedicated time the program director (or the time can be split between co-directors. Please edit the text to reflect the program director(s) and list them by name)
 - 2.** Dedicated time as needed for the faculty members listed in this proposal based on their level of engagement in the program, including supervising/precepting/mentorship, didactic presentations, or program administrative activities such as trainee selection or orientation, or program management and improvement

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3. Access to space for clinical, research/quality improvement, and educational activities, information technology, and administrative assistance to facilitate program functioning
 4. Administrative support for program administration, including managing Fiscal, Human Resources, travel, and other needs related to onboarding, enrollment, and termination of fellows. This includes developing a specific process for submitting and verifying documents required for the appointment of Advanced Fellows
 5. Travel and registration funds for the Program Co-Directors, selected faculty, and all fellows to annually attend at least one national meeting identified as a core activity by the Coordinating Center. Funding for travel to additional meetings is highly desirable and should be addressed
- ii. In addition to the mandated section listed above, the Facility Director's letter may include additional text to provide additional examples of the facility's level of support for the program. Section 1 of the scoring table in section 5C has criteria used to evaluate facility's enhanced support for the proposal.
- iii. The director's letter should also include the name, title, telephone number, and e-mail address for any facility contacts who should receive notification about the award decision.

- B. The Core Narrative** should be organized into the following sections, in the following order:
1. Brief Summary of Proposal
 2. Faculty Resources and Leadership Commitment
 3. Learning Environment and Educational Resources
 4. Curriculum and Instruction
 5. Qualifications of the Program Director(s) and Faculty (see instructions below)
 6. Program Administration, Evaluation, and Improvement Plan
 7. Potential for Impact on VHA and Veterans Health

Applications should address the scoring criteria in each of the sections of the scoring table in section 5C, as these will guide the application review process.

- C. The Program Director and Faculty** document includes several items, which should be merged into one pdf and labeled as Program Director and Faculty for upload.

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To address the **Program Director(s)** qualifications, include a Program Director Qualifications Summary using the template at the end of this attachment (page 25).

Address the program **Faculty** qualifications by completing the required Program Faculty table below. Add rows and change cell sizes as needed.

Use section 5 of the Core Narrative to provide any additional details and context regarding the faculty qualifications. The Program Director and Faculty document can be referred to in the narrative description to avoid the need for redundancy regarding program director or faculty qualifications.

Program Faculty			
Name and Title	Terminal Degree(s), University, year, licensure (if applicable)	Relevant Clinical and/or Research Specialties, representative publications, grant funding. Precepting, teaching, mentorship experience	Program activities and time devoted

D. Additional Required Letters of Support The letters outlined below should be merged into one pdf document, titled Additional Letters of Support. There are no specific content requirements for these letters, but each should outline clear support for the program based on the writer’s specific organizational role.

- i.** Facility Designated Education Officer (DEO)
- ii.** VISN Director and/or Service Line Director. In addition to an overall statement of support, include a description of any unique contributions the VISN can make to the fellowship program (such as helping fund travel to required meetings or funding for fellows’ educational projects)

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- iii. Chiefs of Services or equivalent individuals managing the services from which most of the faculty members will come. These letters should describe support for the educational objectives of the program and a willingness to allow faculty member to participate
 - iv. Affiliates associated with disciplines for which trainees are anticipated. Support or in-kind match, if any, such as tuition waivers for courses, course credits, equipment, library use, space, etc. should be noted
- E. **Additional Appendices** (if desired) to provide any additional details relevant to the facility and the proposed training program)
- F. **Progress Report** of Fellowship Program to date (for existing sites only).
- i. Provide a concise narrative description of the history of the program, including:
 - Success and/or difficulties with recruitment of fellows
 - Any changes in goals and performance of the program over time
 - Assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the program and plans to strengthen the program if major weaknesses are identified
 - Other outcomes of note such as particular fellow alumni achievement, other benefits to VHA, academic affiliates, and community that relate to the program.
 - List of publications, presentations, or other achievements of your site’s fellows

ii. Provide a table of all previous fellow participants using the format below:

Name	Profession	Start date	End date	Position immediately after fellowship (including VHA status)	Current Position

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Program Director Qualifications Summary

Complete this template (2-page maximum) for each program director and co-director (if applicable). Please delete the instructive notes in italics before submitting.

NAME

Current and Past Positions

Describe your current position and relevant past positions. Be sure to emphasize experiences related to health professions education and relevant clinical, scholarship, and/or administrative/leadership positions.

Education

List institutions, degrees, and dates awarded

Awards and Honors

List the awards (grants and fellowships) and honors you have received

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Selected Publications

Include citations for books, articles, and book chapters

Selected Presentations

Include citations for professional presentations

Other Relevant Professional Activities and Accomplishments

Provide any other information (relevant to the proposal) about your professional activities and accomplishments