

*Veterans Health Administration*

CAREER

*Historically Black Colleges and Universities*

OPTIONS

*Department of Veterans Affairs*

HANDBOOK



Department of Veterans Affairs

*The Department of Veterans Affairs has a long  
and distinguished record of providing career  
opportunities to diverse groups of talented people.*

*It is a record and commitment that  
we are especially proud of and  
strive to continuously improve.*





VA's Commitment to  
*Historically Black Colleges and Universities*

This VA Career Options Handbook describes career opportunities and educational programs for students enrolled in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Every year, these institutions graduate thousands of men and women who are eager and able to make significant contributions in the workplace.

Throughout our own organizations, graduates – as well as current students – from these important institutions have enjoyed continued success, functioning in a variety of roles. Most importantly, they have helped VA accomplish our mission of “Putting Veterans First.”

Historically Black Colleges and Universities have overcome many challenges in building their solid tradition of quality education for African-Americans. VA is proud to be an active participant in the community of HBCUs. This relationship has deeply enriched the abilities of VA to fulfill our primary mission: To care for our Nation’s veterans while providing a diverse selection of career opportunities to the graduates of these fine institutions.

To that end, it is with great pleasure and best wishes for your future that VA presents this Career Options Handbook for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. We encourage you to take advantage of the resources that are contained in this handbook.



# Executive Order

## Introduction

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed Executive Order 12232, which established a federal program designed “to overcome the effects of discriminatory treatment and to strengthen and expand the capacity of Historically Black Colleges and Universities to provide quality education.”

The primary mission of the 105 Historically Black Colleges and Universities is the education of Black Americans. By definition, these educational institutions were all established prior to 1964; however, most were founded during the 1800s. Throughout much of their history, these institutions prevailed over discrimination in the allocation of resources to provide the highest level of education for many of today’s Black Americans.

The success of these institutions is evidenced by the long list of prestigious HBCU graduates who have gone on to attain truly remarkable achievements, including Civil Rights Leader and Nobel Laureate, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., graduate of Morehouse College; Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, graduate of

Lincoln University and Howard University; and Mary McLeod Bethune, graduate of Barber-Scotia College and founder and president of Bethune-Cookman College. Each year, thousands of HBCU graduates enter the workforce, fully prepared and ready to meet the challenges of the professional community.

Since 1948, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has worked in association with HBCUs. Over the years, this partnership has witnessed the tremendous success of many programs, such as cooperative education and those covered under a variety of medical affiliations. Opportunities for program expansions are actively pursued whenever possible.

As part of VA’s efforts to respond to, and comply with, the President’s Executive Order, we have developed the VA Career Options Handbook for HBCUs. This handbook provides a brief yet informative glimpse of selected career opportunities available within the Veterans Health Administration, along with a summary of basic qualifications required for each occupation and the benefits of a career with VA.

*“...to overcome the effects of discriminatory treatment and to strengthen and expand the capacity of Historically Black Colleges and Universities to provide quality education.”*



# AN OVERVIEW

*Veterans Affairs*

More than a century ago, President Lincoln made a promise to America's servicemen and women, pledging the care and concern of a grateful Nation for the sacrifices they made to preserve freedom. Since 1930, the mission of VA has been to keep that promise. As the principal veteran advocate, VA ensures America's veterans and their families receive the care, support and recognition they have earned in service to our Nation.

VA ranks third in size for governmental agencies. As one of the largest health care providers in the world, VA provides inpatient medical care to more than 680,000 veterans and handles nearly 40 million outpatient visits each year. Its compensation and benefits programs provide compensation to 2.5 million disabled veterans and benefits to more than 863,000 veterans and their survivors.

Formerly known as the Veterans Administration, VA was established as a Cabinet-level Department on March 15, 1989 and organized into three main administrations:

- **The Veterans Health Administration (VHA)** provides quality primary care, specialized care and related medical and social support services to veterans at more than 1,300 facilities nationwide. For more than 50 years, the VHA has also been a worldwide leader in conducting research studies.
- **The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)** administers an integrated program of non-medical benefits and services authorized by law to veterans, their dependents and survivors. The major benefits include compensation, pension, burial benefits, rehabilitation assistance, education and training assistance, home loan guarantees and insurance coverage.
- **The National Cemetery Administration (NCA)** provides for the burial of eligible veterans and family members in more than 119 national cemeteries in 39 states (and Puerto Rico), as well as 33 soldier's lots and monument sites. The annual burial rate exceeds 82,000 and is expected to peak through 2006. More than 2.4 million veterans, spouses and dependents are honored with a burial in the system's nearly 14,000 acres of land.



# VHA

## Veterans Health Administration

The mission of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is four-fold:

- Provide high-quality medical care and rehabilitation to veterans.
- Conduct research and investigation of veterans' diseases and disabilities.
- Offer education and training to the Nation's health care workers.
- Supply backup medical care to the Department of Defense in war or national emergencies.

With 180,000 employees, the VHA's nationwide network (including Puerto Rico and the Philippines) of medical facilities includes 174 medical centers. Supporting facilities include 773 ambulatory care and community-based clinics, 135 nursing homes, 43 domiciliaries, 206 readjustment counseling centers and various other facilities.

The VHA also actively pursues and maintains affiliations with some of the most prestigious medical schools in the country, including HBCUs and teaching hospitals. Through our academic alliances, the VHA has been responsible for training more than half of all doctors in the U.S. today. Eighty-five percent of black physicians in this country are graduates of HBCUs.

In addition to direct patient care services, the VHA is one of the country's largest research organizations with medical breakthroughs that dramatically altered the field of medicine. In fact, two VHA investigators received the Nobel Prize in Medicine for their medical contributions. The

VHA also revolutionized tuberculosis treatment, pioneered liver and kidney transplants, and implanted the first cardiac pacemaker. Today, more than 13,000 ongoing studies are underway at VA medical centers across the country.

The long and exciting history of comprehensive quality medical care within the VHA continues to the present day. Technological advances, such as the country's first filmless radiology department and bedside computer terminals for patient charting, provide both patients and health care professionals with state-of-the-art health care delivery systems.

VA's approach to providing health care to our country's veterans is as current as the technology and research that stand behind it. Our health care professionals utilize a team approach whereby interdisciplinary teams composed of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, occupational and physical therapists, social workers and other staff members closely manage all aspects of each patient's care - from outpatient clinic care and admission through the duration of the patient's hospital stay and follow-up care upon discharge. Each team member contributes his or her own special expertise while enhancing the overall quality of care the patient receives within the focus of the total team.



# VA Employment Information

## Employment Policies

Besides the minimum qualifications shown for the occupations listed in this brochure, the following are required:

- U.S. Citizenship (non-citizens may be appointed when qualified citizens are not available).
- English language proficiency. Health care professionals appointed to direct patient-care positions must be proficient in spoken and written English.
- Successful professional record
- Personal interview
- Satisfactory physical examination

## Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Assignments

Under the IPA program, temporary assignments to accomplish work of mutual concern and benefit to VA facilities and faculty members of institutions of higher education may be offered. Assignments of VA officials to an educational institution and/or permanent faculty members to a VA facility can be made on either a full-time or part-time basis for up to two years, and may be extended for two more years. Financial arrangements, including salary and benefits, travel and transportation expenses, are negotiable. At the end of the assignment, IPA professionals return to their organization with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

To explore with a VA facility the prospects of professional enrichment through an IPA assignment, contact the particular VA facility's Human Resources Management Service.

## Salary Information

In general, starting salaries and grades are determined by the nature and extent of professional education, training and experience, and the duties of the position being filled. For many occupations, special entrance salary rates are in effect at certain locations.

Registered nurses and certified registered nurse anesthetists employed in VA are covered by a locality-based pay system that is designed to ensure that VA nurses are paid competitive rates within local labor markets. As such, salaries for nurses vary by location.

Physicians and dentists employed in VA are normally eligible for special pay in addition to basic pay. The amount of special pay is based on a variety of factors, including full-time status, length of VA service, board certifications and the assignment's administrative responsibility level. In addition, some VA medical centers offer additional amounts of special pay for certain specialties based on recruitment and retention conditions in a particular geographic location and/or scarce medical specialty.

# Selected Professions

*Typically Employed at VA Health Care Facilities*

# Pro

## AUDIOLOGIST/SPEECH PATHOLOGIST

VA's mission is to provide the best possible care for the Nation's veterans. In recognition of the contributions made by our employees in helping achieve this goal, VA offers both tangible and intangible benefits.

VA provides a supportive environment that encourages professional growth and development, and offers individual recognition for personal achievement.

In addition to these professional opportunities, VA offers extensive employment benefits and educational opportunities that include generous leave accrual policies, mobility and educational assistance programs.

Audiologists and speech pathologists perform, supervise and administer professional scientific work in communicative disorders, including research, consultation and training. Their prime responsibility is to help individuals achieve better communication. Audiologists and speech pathologists work to resolve communicative disorders, which are reflected in impaired hearing, voice, language or speech. They help patients make effective adjustments to these disorders.

### Requirements

Audiologists must have successfully completed all the requirements for a master's degree in an accredited program that includes 18 semester hours in the field of audiology with an approved clinical practice.

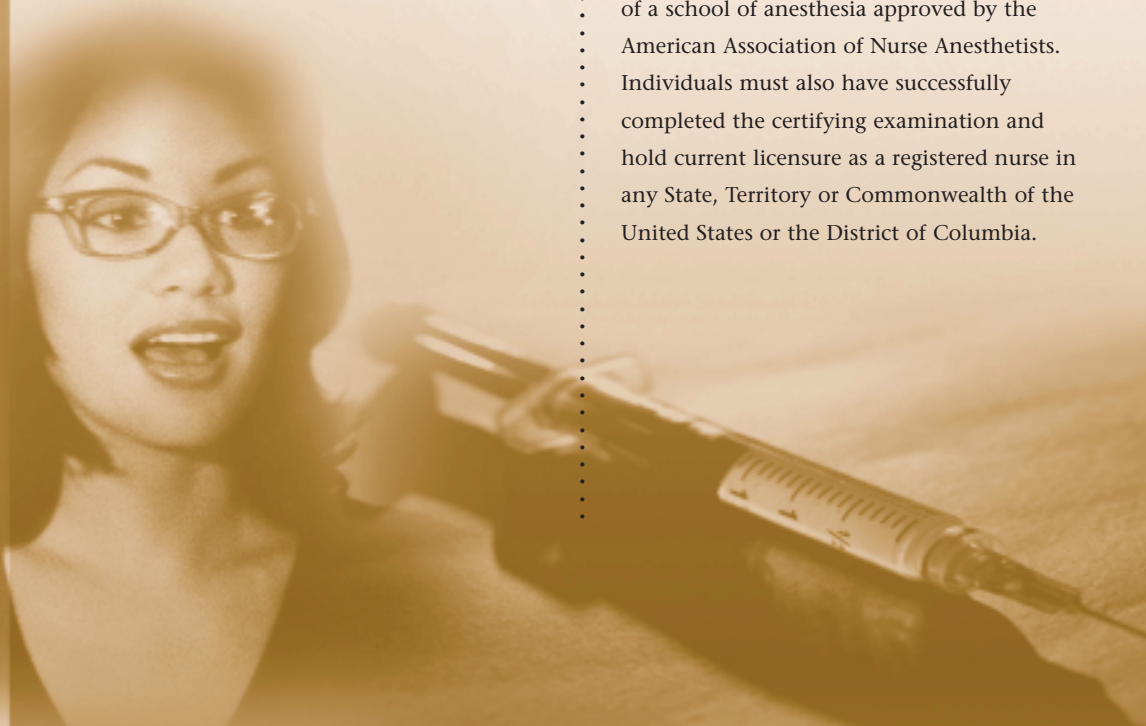
Speech pathologists must have successfully completed all the requirements for a master's degree in an accredited program that includes 18 semester hours in the field of speech pathology with an approved clinical practice.

## CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETIST

As key members of the anesthesia care team, certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) assess the patient's condition to plan the appropriate anesthesia. They practice with a high degree of autonomy, often being solely responsible for the administration of anesthesia. In VA, CRNAs work closely with physicians and other health care practitioners and have the opportunity to administer a variety of anesthetic procedures, make recommendations for tests and medications, supervise recovery from anesthesia, and aid in establishing discharge policy protocols, as well as design and conduct research projects. CRNAs routinely interact one-on-one with veteran patients, addressing questions and concerns, and providing consultation and guidance as part of the overall treatment program.

### Requirements

VA CRNAs must be graduates of a school of professional nursing approved by the appropriate State accrediting agency at the time the program was completed by the applicant; and a graduate of a school of anesthesia approved by the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists. Individuals must also have successfully completed the certifying examination and hold current licensure as a registered nurse in any State, Territory or Commonwealth of the United States or the District of Columbia.





# Professions

The following is a listing of selected health care or mission-related occupations typically employed at VA health care facilities. Requirements and qualifications are minimums for each occupation shown. Because a variety of methods can be used in staffing these positions, basic information about application procedures is shown elsewhere in this brochure. Each listing provides a summary of these occupations along with a brief description of minimum requirements and qualifications.

## CERTIFIED RESPIRATORY THERAPIST

Whether working in intensive care, rehabilitation, quality assurance, nursing home care or one of many other options, VA respiratory therapists are challenged daily to provide the most complex diagnostics and interventions, as well as actively participating in patient care decision-making. As a respiratory therapist with the largest health care system in America, VA therapists may find themselves involved with ventilator management in intensive care, oxygen, aerosol therapy, pulse oximetry, bedside pulmonary functions and intubations. Other possibilities may include involvement in quality management or a full range of current critical care technologies, such as non-invasive monitoring or the use of pressure volume and flow volume loops to monitor acute respiratory failure. For respiratory therapists interested in clinical research, VA offers a variety of options that are further extended by the numerous affiliations with schools of respiratory therapy and faculty members on staff at many VA medical centers.

### Requirements

VA respiratory therapists must have specialized experience or have successfully completed an accredited course of study. Candidates must also possess a certificate as a registered respiratory therapist (RRT) from the National Board of Respiratory Care (NBRC) and a registry number or a certificate from another body that the NBRC recognizes as its credentialing equivalent.

## COMPUTER SPECIALISTS/ PROGRAMMERS

Opportunities exist in VA for computer specialists and programmers to work with VA's computer systems. Within both the computer specialist and computer programmer fields, opportunities in various sub-specialties are available. Sub-specialties within the computer specialist field include computer operations, system analysis and operations support. VA computer specialists and programmers provide a wide variety of services and products that include management of computer system resources; development and implementation of plans and programs that ensure the integrity and security of computer systems and data; technical and operational support; standardized applications software that can be used at all VHA facilities; technical integration of software applications through the use of a common database; and functional integration through utilities, such as order entry, results reporting and flexible health care summaries. Computer systems and applications software are part of leading-edge technology in the integrated hospital information system field.

### Requirements

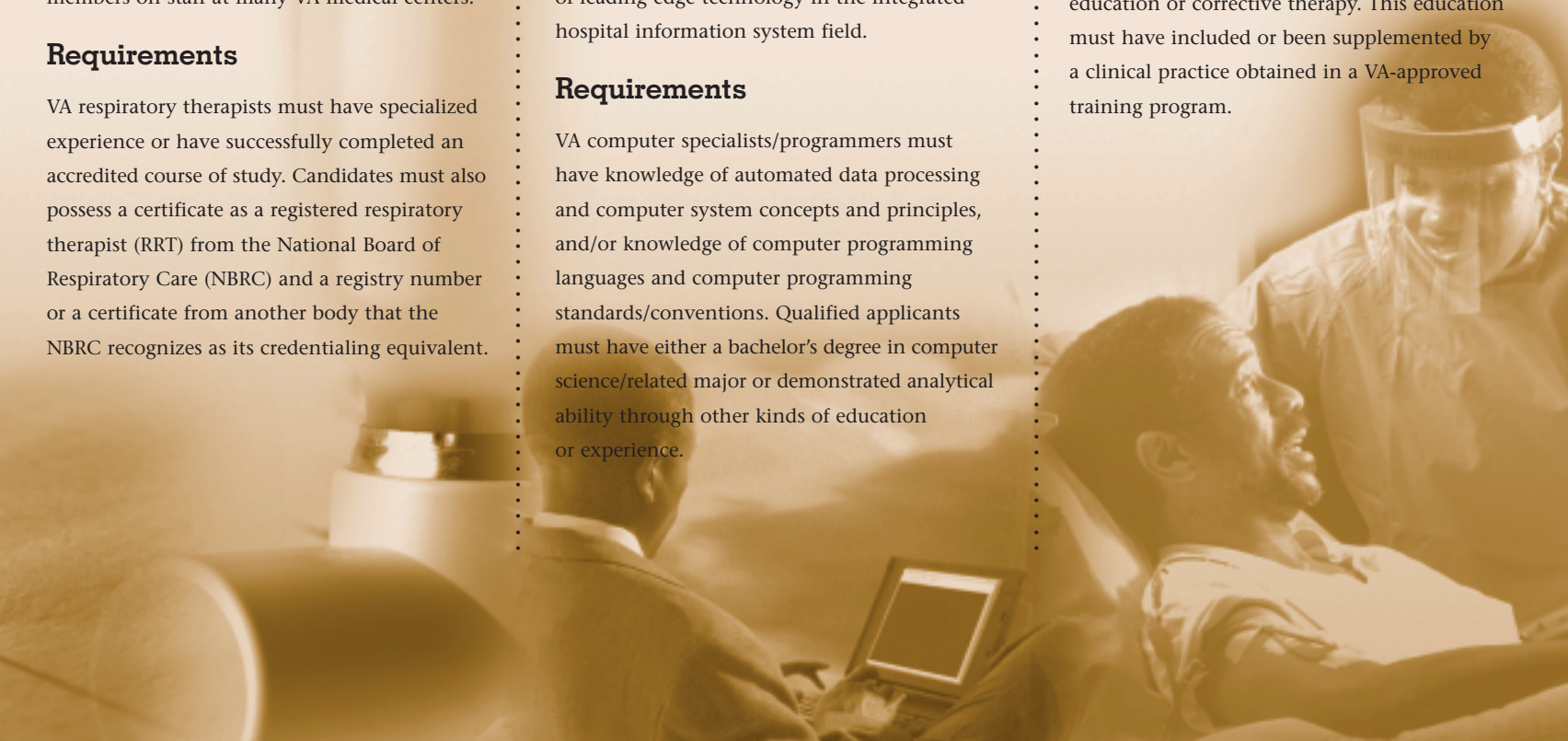
VA computer specialists/programmers must have knowledge of automated data processing and computer system concepts and principles, and/or knowledge of computer programming languages and computer programming standards/conventions. Qualified applicants must have either a bachelor's degree in computer science/related major or demonstrated analytical ability through other kinds of education or experience.

## CORRECTIVE THERAPIST (KINESIOTHERAPIST)

Corrective therapists use corrective exercises to maintain or improve the general state of health of patients by preventing muscular deterioration; conserving and increasing strength; maintaining function; and retaining mobility. They evaluate the history of patients by interviews, tests and measurements, and use such findings and the therapy orders of physicians to develop and implement corrective therapy programs for individual patients. These programs involve instructing patients in ambulation and educating patients to develop skill and understanding in activities of daily living. In VA, the work of a corrective therapist inspires the self-confidence and motivation of patients to carry out therapy treatments.

### Requirements

VA corrective therapists must have successfully completed a full four-year course of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in physical education or corrective therapy. This education must have included or been supplemented by a clinical practice obtained in a VA-approved training program.



# Selected Professions

*Typically Employed at VA Health Care Facilities*

# Pro

## DENTIST

The practice of hospital dentistry offers opportunities and challenges that are typically not found in other environments. Many veteran patients are medically, physically and/or emotionally compromised, posing unique dentistry treatment challenges. VA dentists and other dentistry professionals utilize the full scope of their skills and knowledge in their daily practice in treating patients with diverse and complex medical conditions. Clinical areas of specialty in dentistry at VA include prosthodontics, periodontics, maxillofacial prosthodontics, endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, and oral pathology.

VA has a long-standing commitment to the education of health care professionals and to the conduct of basic and applied oral health research. VA dental staff has opportunities to participate in and be enriched by these activities. The education and research missions are further strengthened by VA's affiliations with all U.S. dental schools. VA's highly recognized training programs offer unique and comprehensive educational opportunities for VA dentists and dentistry professionals.

### Requirements

VA dentists must possess a D.D.S. or D.M.D. degree, or an equivalent degree from an institution approved by the Council on Dental Education of the American Dental Association for the year in which the degree was granted. Dentists must also hold a current, full, active and unrestricted license to practice in any State, Territory or Commonwealth of the United States or the District of Columbia. In addition, candidates must have had a hospital-based residency in dental general practice, specialty training or equivalent experience as an active dentist member of a hospital medical staff.

## DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGIST

Diagnostic radiologic technologists are engaged in the performance or supervision of technical work that requires knowledge and competence in the field of diagnostic radiologic examinations. Most diagnostic radiologic technologists work in a hospital or clinic environment, performing examinations and procedures under the direction of a physician. They produce radiologic studies that are used in medical diagnosis and interpreted by physicians to locate injuries, foreign bodies, pathologic conditions or lesions within the body.

### Requirements

For positions within VA, applicants must be certified as diagnostic radiologic technologists by the American Registry of Radiologic Technicians (ARRT). They must also have successfully completed an educational program meeting current Federal standards.

## DIETITIAN

Dietitians at VA medical centers perform or supervise others in providing a full range of professional dietetic services in areas of program development and organization, food preparation and service, patient therapy, and education and research. Clinical dietitians perform duties in the areas of medical nutrition and education, and are responsible for clinical nutrition management, quality improvement and the nutritional phase of medical research studies. VA dietitians work closely with physicians, nurses and other allied health personnel to integrate the patient's nutritional care into the total treatment program. The dietitian's contribution as a team member includes the nutritional assessment of patients and the development of nutritional care plans, nutrition interventions and individualized nutrition education.

### Requirements

VA dietitians must possess a bachelor's degree in dietetics, food nutrition, food service management, institution management or a related science. The curriculum must be accredited by the American Dietetic Association (ADA) at the time of graduation. Completion of an ADA accredited post-bachelor's internship program establishes eligibility for registration. Registration as a dietitian (R.D.) with the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) is required.





# Professions

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## ENGINEER

VA employs civil, mechanical and electrical engineering graduates into its Resident Engineer Training Program. In VA, resident engineers oversee and administer on-site construction contract activities in various locations throughout the United States. The highly sophisticated nature of modern medical center construction has demonstrated the need for problem-solving, decision-making and direct action at the job site. Resident engineers find themselves representing VA daily dealing with professionals from the private sector, such as contract designers and builders. Resident engineers have the advantage of experiencing different geographical areas as they relocate, at VA's expense, to meet the needs of the construction program.

### Requirements

VA engineers must have a professional engineering degree or a combination of education and experience that furnished a thorough knowledge of the physical and mathematical sciences underlying professional engineering.



## EXPANDED-FUNCTION DENTAL AUXILIARY

VA expanded-function dental auxiliaries (EFDAs) - dental hygienists, dental assistants, and dental laboratory technicians - contribute to improving the quality of dental care by placing emphasis on prevention of disease and the maintenance of oral tissues. EFDAs are responsible for preparing dental hygiene treatment plans for patients, including assessment of the problems and the type of oral hygiene required, as well as possessing the clinical skills necessary to provide the treatment.

These dental professionals work closely with the dentist in referring oral abnormalities for evaluation and care. In addition, they regularly interact with other hospital professional staff to provide instruction in the proper techniques of oral hygiene to be applied to bedridden, disabled and chronically ill patients. Candidates must have a knowledge of oral anatomy, oral physiology and the ability to perform a variety of specialized prophylactic and preventive dental hygiene procedures, including root planning and curettage.

### Requirements

VA EFDAs must be graduates of a dental auxiliary education program that included education and training in expanded functions acceptable to the appropriate VA Professional Standards Board. The program, such as a dental assistant or dental hygiene education program, must be accredited by the Council on Dental Education of the American Dental Association and be approved by the appropriate State accrediting agency at the time the program was completed. Individuals must also possess active, current, full and unrestricted licensure as a dental hygienist from a State, Territory or Commonwealth of the United States or the District of Columbia; or evidence of certification from the American Dental Assistants Association as a certified dental assistant.

## HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGER

VA is a leading developer of technology for computerized patient records. State-of-the-art advancements in the health care delivery system have created unique and challenging opportunities for health information managers who are responsible for the management of health information systems consistent with VA's medical, administrative, ethical and legal requirements in the delivery of health care. Duties encompass planning, organizing, directing and controlling medical record services; developing, analyzing and evaluating medical record indexes; cooperating with medical staff in developing methods for evaluation of patient care; and working with medical and administrative staff in research projects utilizing health care information. In VA's health care delivery system, rewarding and technically advanced opportunities await well-qualified health information managers.

### Requirements

VA health information managers must have specialized experience or have successfully completed an accredited course of study. A current health information management credential from the American Health Information Management Association will be helpful as a measure of the health information manager's quality and experience.



# Selected Professions

*Typically Employed at VA Health Care Facilities*

# Pro

## MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIST

Medical technologists are engaged in clinical laboratory work that requires professional knowledge and competence in this field. Most medical technologists work in hospital or outpatient-clinic laboratories performing analyses of human blood, urine and other body fluids or tissues. They produce test data for use by physicians in detecting, diagnosing and treating diseases. Some medical technologists, particularly in smaller laboratories, are generalists. Others specialize in one or more of the clinical disciplines or sub-disciplines (bacteriology, chemistry and microbiology) or functional areas (administration, education and research) of medical technology.

### Requirements

VA medical technologists must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited course of study in medical technology, chemistry or biology that included: 16 semester hours of biological sciences of which one course was in microbiology and one course was in immunology; 16 semester hours of chemistry of which one course was in organic or biochemistry; and three semester hours of college mathematics. However, other types of education, training and experience may be substituted for the above.

## NUCLEAR MEDICINE TECHNOLOGIST

Nuclear medicine technologists possess a professional knowledge of the field of nuclear medicine technology and those aspects of chemistry, physics, mathematics and the biomedical sciences that relate to nuclear medicine. They perform a variety of radioimmunoassay (in vitro) laboratory procedures on biological specimens, in combination with a wide variety of functional studies. These studies of organs and systems involve static and dynamic imaging procedures, the injection of radio nuclides and radio pharmaceuticals, and the use of such specialized equipment as integrated computer imaging systems and single photon emission tomography. VA's nuclear medicine technologists also modify or design nuclear medicine laboratory procedures, establish and monitor quality control systems, and develop and provide formal instruction in the basic-theory, skills and application of laboratory and imaging test procedures.

### Requirements

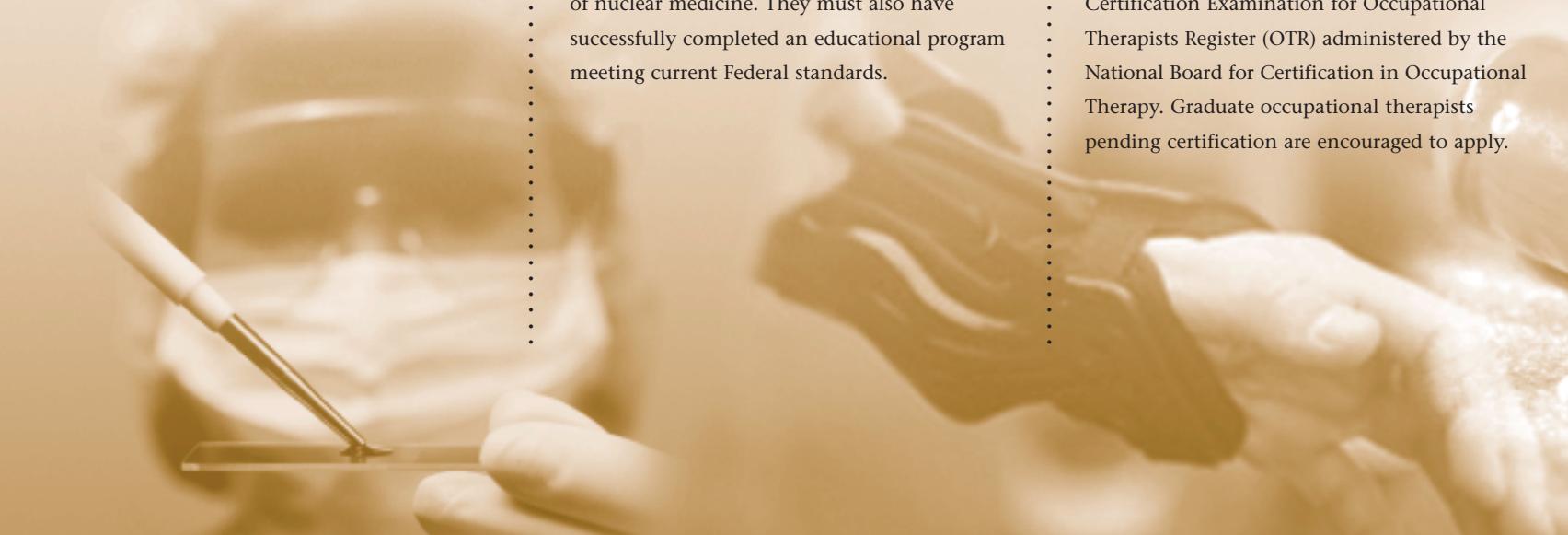
For positions within VA, applicants must be certified in nuclear medicine by the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB) or the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) in the field of nuclear medicine. They must also have successfully completed an educational program meeting current Federal standards.

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

VA occupational therapists practice in an environment that encourages innovation and creativity. They provide services on a continuum from preventive care to extended care to individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities that limit their ability to live and function independently. VA occupational therapists provide treatment for restoration of joint function, muscle strength, sensation, coordination/dexterity, cognitive-perceptual function, evaluation and training in self-care, activities of daily living and work tolerance. Clinical care areas in rehabilitation include mental health, spinal cord injury, hand therapy, work hardening, geriatrics, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse, oncology, orthopedics, neurology, post-traumatic stress, rheumatology, dysphagia and home health.

### Requirements

VA occupational therapists must have graduated with a bachelor's degree in occupational therapy or hold a post-baccalaureate certificate recognized by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education or the Committee on Allied Health, Education and Accreditation of the American Medical Association, or possession of written documentation of passing the Certification Examination for Occupational Therapists Register (OTR) administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy. Graduate occupational therapists pending certification are encouraged to apply.





# Professions

The following is a listing of selected health care or mission-related occupations typically employed at VA health care facilities. Requirements and qualifications are minimums for each occupation shown. Because a variety of methods can be used in staffing these positions, basic information about application procedures is shown elsewhere in this brochure. Each listing provides a summary of these occupations along with a brief description of minimum requirements and qualifications.

## PHARMACIST

VA pharmacists routinely interact one-on-one with patients, addressing questions and concerns, and providing consultation and guidance on the use of prescribed medications. In VA, pharmacists utilize the full scope of their skills and knowledge in their daily practice, providing patient education and participating as a member of the patient care team. VA also offers a variety of specialized programs for pharmacy practice that include such areas as bone marrow transplantation, oncology, geriatrics and nutritional support.

### Requirements

VA pharmacists must possess a bachelor's degree or other first professional degree from an American Council on Pharmaceutical Education accredited school and hold a current license to practice pharmacy in any State, Territory or Commonwealth of the United States or the District of Columbia. Graduate pharmacists expecting licensure within the next 12 months are also encouraged to apply.

## PHYSICAL THERAPIST

VA physical therapists provide treatment to promote functional improvement through a variety of physical modalities and procedures for the purpose of reversing or alleviating physical disability and promoting the highest level of functional independence, especially in the areas of strengthening and gait training. They have the opportunity to specialize and pursue advanced training in a variety of rehabilitation specialties, such as cardiopulmonary, orthopedics, traumatic brain injury, amputee, neuromuscular, spinal cord injury, geriatrics, prosthetics and electrodiagnosis. Physical therapists in VA experience professional freedom of practice backed by the support and experience of a multi-specialty staff and management.

### Requirements

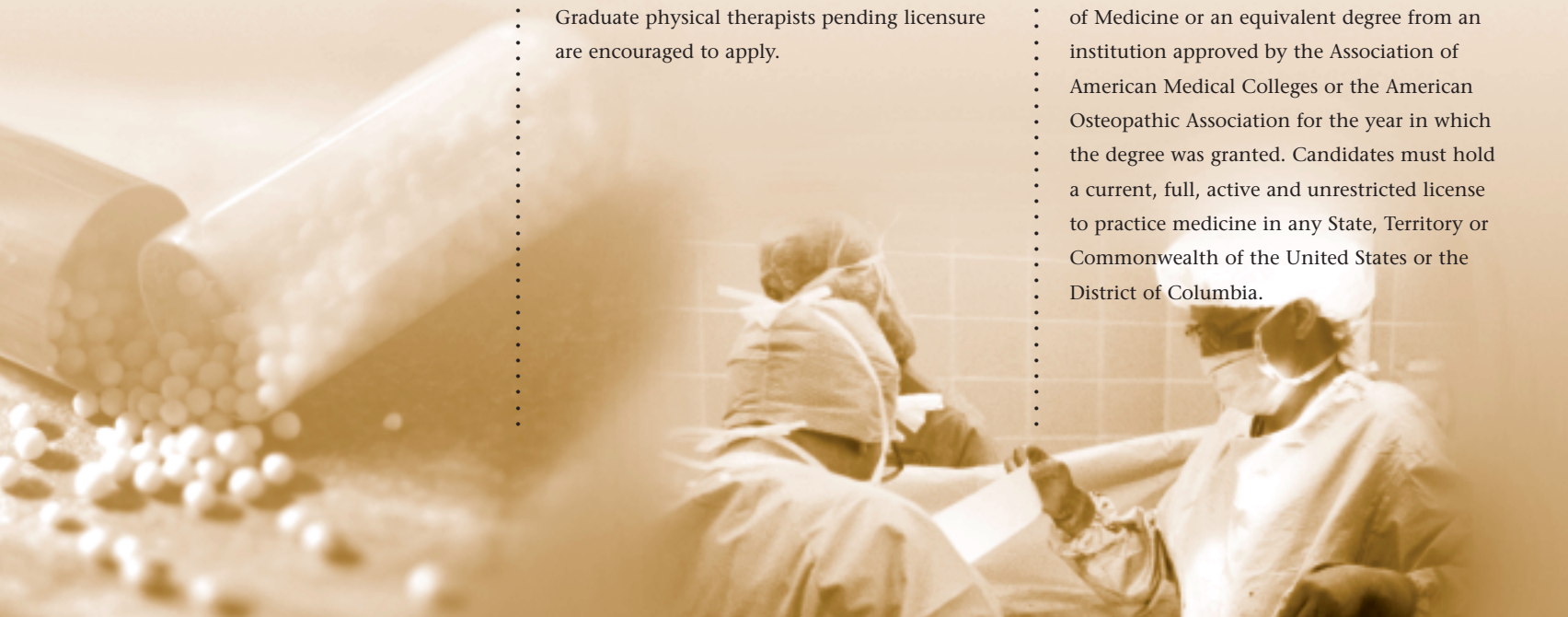
VA physical therapists must have graduated from a physical therapy program accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education or the American Medical Association. Candidates must hold a current license to practice physical therapy in any State, Territory or Commonwealth of the United States or the District of Columbia. Graduate physical therapists pending licensure are encouraged to apply.

## PHYSICIAN

VA physicians treat patients and perform professional and scientific work in one or more fields of medicine. They enjoy being part of a team that is recognized and respected for significant contributions to medicine. From clinical practice to research and academics, VA physicians provide leadership within the medical profession that extends into the communities where they live. To ensure that VA physicians are able to meet their professional and personal goals, a broad range of practice options are available, including general medicine and primary care, along with many specialties and sub-specialties. With such a large number of choices available, physicians find that VA is a place to enjoy a rewarding and fulfilling career. In addition, VA physicians enjoy a quality of life that simply can't be found in private practice. With predictable work hours and conditions, and typically infrequent scheduled on-call duty, VA physicians are able to take time for themselves and their families, while providing compassionate care to veterans.

### Requirements

VA physicians must possess a Degree of Doctor of Medicine or an equivalent degree from an institution approved by the Association of American Medical Colleges or the American Osteopathic Association for the year in which the degree was granted. Candidates must hold a current, full, active and unrestricted license to practice medicine in any State, Territory or Commonwealth of the United States or the District of Columbia.



# Selected Professions

*Typically Employed at VA Health Care Facilities*

# Pro

## PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Physician assistants provide medical care and services under the guidance of a physician. They assist in the examination and observation of patients by performing a variety of duties, such as taking case histories, conducting physical exams and ordering laboratory studies. Physician assistants also carry out special procedures, such as administering injections or other medications, applying or changing dressings, and suturing minor lacerations.

Physician assistant generalists, as well as specialists, enjoy many opportunities to maximize the use of their knowledge and skills. Challenging roles in many areas include primary care, geriatrics, emergency medicine and rehabilitation. Medical and surgical sub-specialty areas include medical, cardiology, renal, infectious diseases, pulmonary, surgical, cardiac, orthopedics, urology, ophthalmology and oncology. VA is also proud to have our medical centers affiliated with more than 30 physician assistant educational programs.

### Requirements

**One of the following:** bachelor's degree from a physician assistant (PA) training program certified by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education of the Physician Assistant; or graduation from a PA training program of at least 12 months duration certified by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education of the Physician Assistant *and* a bachelor's degree in a health care occupation or a health-related science; or graduation from a PA training program of at least 12 months duration certified by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education of the Physician Assistant *and* a period of progressively responsible health care experience, such as independent duty medical corpsman, LPN, RN or medical technologist/technician. The duration of approved academic training and health care experience must total at least five years.

## PSYCHOLOGIST

Psychologists engage in professional and scientific work that relates to behavior, capacities, traits, interests and emotions. This work may include any one or a combination of the following: providing professional clinical services, conducting research and carrying out education/training activities, clinical consultation, supervision and administration. VA psychologists work with a wide range of patients using, refining or developing new techniques in psychodiagnosis, assessment and evaluation; psychotherapy; behavior modification; vocational evaluation; counseling; and job placement programs.

Research psychologists investigate the physical, cognitive, emotional or social aspects of human behavior. In applied fields, psychologists provide a range of direct patient care services and conduct training programs in VA medical facilities. Like other social scientists, psychologists collect and test data to formulate and check the validity of hypotheses.

### Requirements

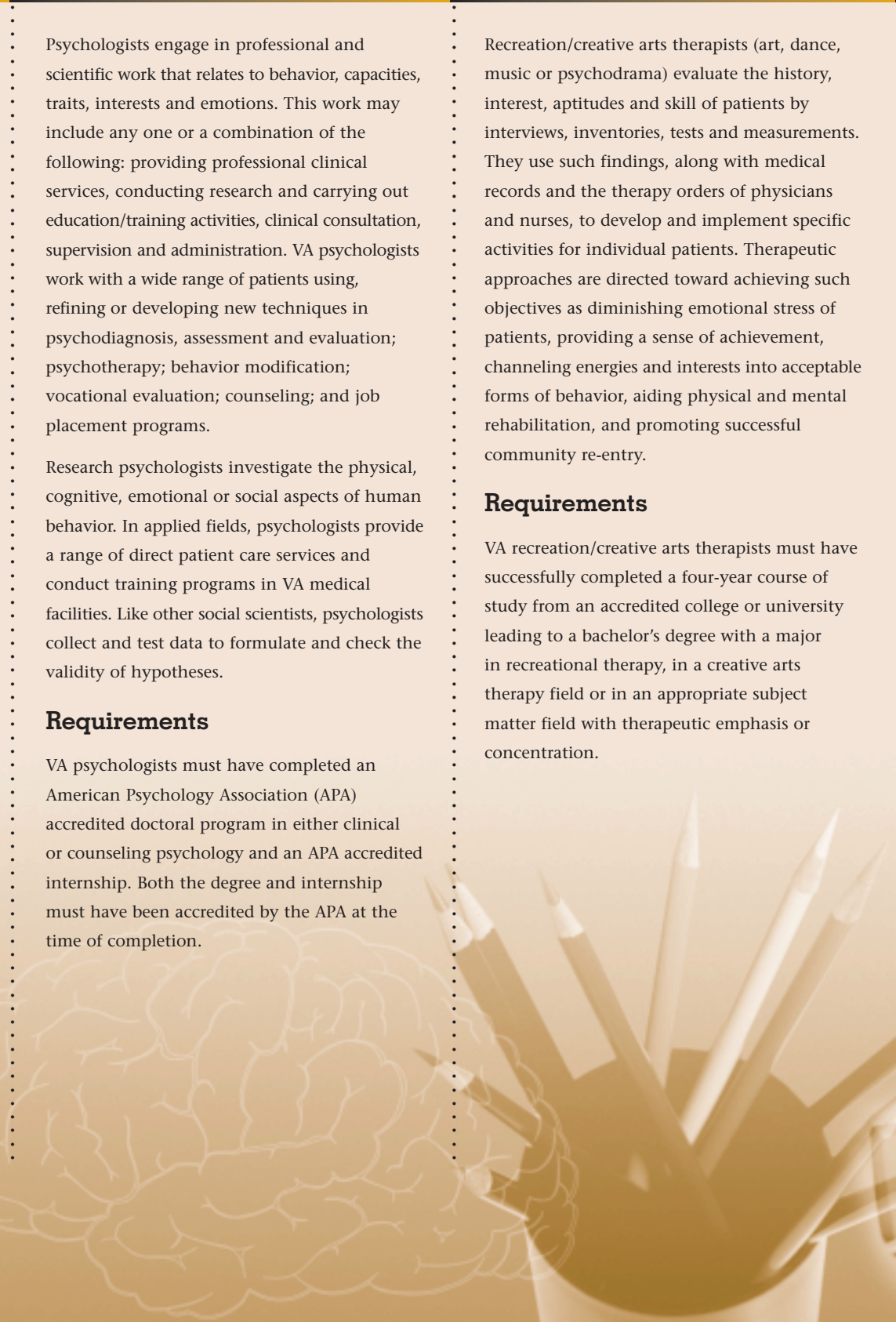
VA psychologists must have completed an American Psychology Association (APA) accredited doctoral program in either clinical or counseling psychology and an APA accredited internship. Both the degree and internship must have been accredited by the APA at the time of completion.

## RECREATION/CREATIVE ARTS THERAPIST

Recreation/creative arts therapists (art, dance, music or psychodrama) evaluate the history, interest, aptitudes and skill of patients by interviews, inventories, tests and measurements. They use such findings, along with medical records and the therapy orders of physicians and nurses, to develop and implement specific activities for individual patients. Therapeutic approaches are directed toward achieving such objectives as diminishing emotional stress of patients, providing a sense of achievement, channeling energies and interests into acceptable forms of behavior, aiding physical and mental rehabilitation, and promoting successful community re-entry.

### Requirements

VA recreation/creative arts therapists must have successfully completed a four-year course of study from an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in recreational therapy, in a creative arts therapy field or in an appropriate subject matter field with therapeutic emphasis or concentration.





# Professions

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## REGISTERED NURSE

The highly valued nurses who have chosen VA nursing as a career (numbering more than 35,000) continually share their enormous satisfaction with the scope and independence of their practice, as well as with the wealth of employment opportunities readily available within VA's vast national system of medical centers and clinics. VA nurses practice in nearly every health care and nursing specialty, and in settings that range from medical centers and outpatient clinics to nursing homes, storefront clinics, hospices, psychiatric-mental health centers and homeless outreach programs. In addition to state-of-the-art clinical practice, VA nurses are also encouraged to actively participate in and pursue career opportunities in nursing administration, education and research. Nurses choosing to work within the VA Nursing Service have the opportunity to continue their learning through formal and informal continuing education programs, and through the pursuit of academic preparation leading to advanced degrees.

### Requirements

VA nurses must have graduated from a school of professional nursing approved by the State accrediting agency at the time the applicant completed the program, and must hold current registration as a graduate professional nurse in any State, Territory or Commonwealth of the United States or the District of Columbia. Recent graduates may receive temporary appointments as Graduate Nurse Technicians pending state board examinations.

## SOCIAL WORKER

Social workers make use of the skills of social casework, social group work and other major treatment modalities in helping patients and their families handle the social, emotional and economic pressures influencing continuity of family/community life during periods of illness and stress. In VA, the social worker participates with the physician and other treatment personnel in synthesizing and maximizing rehabilitation goals. VA social work activities are mainly located in the setting of the medical center proper, the outpatient clinics and mental hygiene clinics. These services are also provided in such special settings as day treatment centers, nursing homes, domiciliaries and in such programs as alcohol, day and night hospital treatment, blind rehabilitation and veterans outreach centers.

### Requirements

VA social workers must possess a master's degree in social work from a school of social work accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

## THERAPEUTIC RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGIST

Therapeutic radiologic technologists apply knowledge of anatomy and physiology, oncologic pathology, radiation oncology techniques, treatment planning procedures and dosimetry in the performance of their duties. They administer a prescribed course of treatment, observe the patient during treatment and maintain patient records of the treatment. Additional duties may include tumor localization, dosimetry, patient follow-up and patient education. Applicants must have a stable, self-assured personality and display attributes of compassion, concern and competence in meeting the special needs of the oncology patient.

### Requirements

For positions within VA, applicants must be certified as Therapeutic Radiologic Technologists by the American Registry of Radiologic Technicians (ARRT). They must also have successfully completed an educational program meeting current Federal standards.





## A Career with VA

# Employment Benefits

### Leave and Holidays

- Depending on the occupation being filled, employees earn from 13 to 26 days of paid annual (vacation/personal) leave each year. Annual leave begins to accrue immediately.
- Employees earn 13 days of sick leave each year with no limit on accumulation.
- The Voluntary Leave Transfer Program allows other Federal employees to donate annual leave for a medical emergency of an employee or family member.
- The Family and Medical Leave Act allows employees to balance their work and family life by taking reasonable amounts of leave - up to 12 weeks - for medical reasons, for the birth or adoption/foster care of a child, and for the care of a child, spouse or parent with a serious health problem.
- Military leave is authorized up to 15 days a year for active reservists and National Guard members.
- There are 10 paid Federal holidays.

### Health and Life Insurance

- VA offers a variety of group health insurance plans with premiums partially paid by the Federal Government. You can change plans yearly.
- Term life insurance with coverage based on salary is available with the cost shared by the Federal Government. Family and additional coverage options are available.

### Liability Protection

The United States Government accepts full responsibility and liability for the actions of its employees during the exercise of their official duties. VA health care professionals, therefore, are protected by the Federal Government in instances of alleged malpractice or negligence resulting from the performance of their duties in or for the VHA.

### Retirement

New employees are covered by the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS), a three-tier retirement plan composed of Social Security benefits, FERS basic benefits and the Thrift Savings Plan, a tax-deferred savings plan with an automatic basic contribution and partial matching of employee contributions by the Federal Government. Investment options include government securities, stocks and bonds.

### Mobility

VA medical facilities are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. An employee may transfer to any location where there is an available vacancy without loss of benefits.

### Awards and Honors

Opportunities to receive both monetary and honorary recognition for overall superior performance and special or unique achievements are available. In addition, professional achievements are recognized in such areas as research, publications, advanced degrees and election to an office of a professional organization.

### Additional Benefits:

- Free parking facilities at most locations
- Smoke- and drug-free workplace
- Child care at some facilities
- Annual physical examination
- Employee associations
- Employee wellness programs
- Dining facilities and retail stores
- Credit Unions



# Educational Opportunities at VA

The Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes the importance of ongoing education and the benefit it provides to veteran patients and employees. VA administers several initiatives to enhance the educational preparation of its staff, including scholarship and loan repayment programs. Examples of these programs include:

## **Education Debt Reduction Program (EDRP)**

The EDRP allows VA to provide up to \$24,000 in education loan repayments for newly appointed health care professionals. The education loan(s) must be for courses that led directly to qualifying for the appointed position.

## **Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP)**

This scholarship program allows VHA employees to further their education and obtain degrees qualifying them for health care positions for which recruitment and retention is difficult.

## **National Nursing Education Initiative (NNEI)**

The NNEI is established under the same authority as the EISP, but is primarily aimed at supporting associate degree and diploma registered nurses in obtaining their Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees. The VA qualification standard for nursing requires a BSN degree to advance beyond Nurse Level I. This program can also be used to obtain advanced degrees.

## **VA Learning Opportunities Residency (VALOR)**

The VALOR program enables outstanding students who have completed the final semester or quarter of their junior year to develop competencies in clinical nursing while working at an approved VA health care facility.

## **Tuition Support Program**

Employees in health care disciplines identified as VA shortage categories are eligible for funding to enroll in job-related courses.

## **Tuition Reimbursement Program**

Tuition reimbursement is available to full-time VA employees who are enrolled in any accredited nursing degree program. Prerequisite courses required for acceptance into a degree program are also funded.



*A Career in the*

# HOW TO APPLY

## *Department of Veterans Affairs*

Occupations shown in this brochure are employed in VA under two Federal personnel systems: Title 5, U.S.C. governs positions included within the competitive civil service and Title 38, U.S.C. covers those considered to be within the excepted service. As such, different rules and regulations governing application procedures, initial appointment, pay and advancement apply.

The VA Placement Service can be reached at 1-800-949-0002 concerning the following positions:

advanced practice nurse, certified registered nurse anesthetist, certified registered respiratory therapist, certified respiratory therapy technician, dentist, expanded-function dental auxiliary, licensed practical nurse, nurse practitioner, occupational therapist, optometrist, pharmacist, physical therapist, physician, physician assistant, podiatrist and registered nurse. Employment information can also be obtained by contacting:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Placement Service  
1555 Poydras Street  
Suite 1971  
New Orleans, LA 70112

For the latest job vacancies, employment information and to submit an online application visit [www.vacareers.com](http://www.vacareers.com).

Applicants interested in applying for occupations covered by the competitive civil service, such as dietician, medical technologist, nursing assistant, psychologist or social worker, can find announcements on the [www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov) Web site or by directly calling the human resource management office at the medical facility. Contact numbers and a facility locator can be found at [www.vacareers.com](http://www.vacareers.com) and [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

Applicants are encouraged to directly contact the Human Resources Management Office at the facility where they desire employment consideration for information about local opportunities and application procedures.

Telephone numbers for VA facilities can be found in local directories under "United States Government" or by visiting [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

[www.vacareers.com](http://www.vacareers.com)

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

[www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)



## VA Health Care Facilities

VA facilities have specialized medical care programs and a variety of opportunities for health care professionals. To gain a firsthand view of VA health care, you are invited to visit. Please call or write to arrange an appointment. Telephone numbers are listed in local directories under "U.S. Government" or address correspondence to Human Resource Management Service, VA Medical Center, City, State, Zip Code.

ALABAMA  
Birmingham (35233)  
Montgomery (36109)  
Tuscaloosa (35404)  
Tuskegee (36083)

ALASKA  
Anchorage (99508)

ARIZONA  
Phoenix (85012)  
Prescott (86313)  
Tucson (85723)

ARKANSAS  
Fayetteville (72703)  
Little Rock (72205)

CALIFORNIA  
Bakersfield (93301)  
Fresno (93703)  
Livermore (94550)  
Loma Linda (92357)  
Long Beach (90822)  
Los Angeles (90012)  
Martinez (94553)  
Menlo Park (94025)  
Palo Alto (94304)  
San Diego (92161)  
San Francisco (94121)  
Santa Barbara (93110)  
Sepulveda (91343)  
West Los Angeles (90073)

COLORADO  
Denver (80220)  
Grand Junction (81501)  
Pueblo (81004)

CONNECTICUT  
Newington (06111)  
West Haven (06516)

DELAWARE  
Wilmington (19805)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Washington (20422)

FLORIDA  
Bay Pines (33708)  
Gainesville (32608)  
Lake City (32055)  
Miami (33125)  
Tampa (33612)  
West Palm Beach (33410)

GEORGIA  
Augusta (30904)  
Decatur (Atlanta 30033)  
Dublin (31021)

HAWAII  
Honolulu (96819)

IDAHO  
Boise (83702)

ILLINOIS  
Chicago (Lakeside 60611)  
Chicago (West Side 60612)  
Danville (61832)  
Hines (60141)  
Marion (62959)  
North Chicago (60064)

INDIANA  
Fort Wayne (46805)  
Indianapolis (46202)  
Marion (96953)

IOWA  
Des Moines (50310)  
Iowa City (52246)  
Knoxville (50138)

KANSAS  
Leavenworth (66048)  
Topeka (66622)  
Wichita (67218)

KENTUCKY  
Lexington (40511)  
Louisville (40206)

LOUISIANA  
Alexandria (71306)  
New Orleans (70146)  
Shreveport (71101)

MAINE  
Togus (04330)

MARYLAND  
Baltimore (21201)  
Fort Howard (21052)  
Perry Point (21902)

MASSACHUSETTS  
Bedford (01730)  
Boston (02130)  
Northampton (01053)  
Brockton (02401)  
West Roxbury (02132)

MICHIGAN  
Ann Arbor (48105)  
Battle Creek (49015)  
Detroit (48201)  
Iron Mountain (49801)  
Saginaw (48602)

MINNESOTA  
Minneapolis (55417)  
St. Cloud (56303)

MISSISSIPPI  
Biloxi (39531)  
Jackson (39216)

MISSOURI  
Columbia (65201)  
Kansas City (64128)  
Poplar Bluff (63901)  
St. Louis (63125)

MONTANA  
Fort Harrison (59636)  
Miles City (59301)

NEBRASKA  
Grand Island (68803)  
Lincoln (68510)  
Omaha (68105)

NEVADA  
Las Vegas (89106)  
Reno (89520)

NEW HAMPSHIRE  
Manchester (03104)

NEW JERSEY  
East Orange (07018)  
Lyons (07939)

NEW MEXICO  
Albuquerque (87108)

NEW YORK  
Albany (12208)  
Bath (14810)  
Bronx (10468)  
Brooklyn (11209)  
Buffalo (14215)  
Canandaigua (14424)  
Castle Point (12511)  
Montrose (10548)  
New York (Manhattan 10010)  
Northport (Long Island 11768)  
St. Albans (11425)  
Syracuse (13210)

NORTH CAROLINA  
Asheville (28805)  
Durham (27705)  
Fayetteville (28301)  
Salisbury (28144)

NORTH DAKOTA  
Fargo (58102)

OHIO  
Chillicothe (45601)  
Cincinnati (45220)  
Cleveland (44106)  
Columbus (43203)  
Dayton (45428)

OKLAHOMA  
Muskogee (74401)  
Oklahoma City (73104)

OREGON  
Portland (97207)  
Roseburg (97470)  
White City (97503)  
(Domiciliary )

PENNSYLVANIA  
Altoona (16602)  
Butler (16001)  
Coatesville (19320)  
Erie (16504)  
Lebanon (17042)  
Philadelphia (19104)  
Pittsburgh (Highland Drive 15206)  
Pittsburgh (University Drive 15240)  
Wilkes-Barre (18711)

PHILIPPINES  
Manila (96515)  
(FPO AF)

PUERTO RICO  
San Juan (00921)

RHODE ISLAND  
Providence (02908)

SOUTH CAROLINA  
Charleston (29401)  
Columbia (29209)

SOUTH DAKOTA  
Fort Meade (57741)  
Hot Springs (57747)  
Sioux Falls (57117)

TENNESSEE  
Memphis (38104)  
Mountain Home (37684)  
Murfreesboro (37129)  
Nashville (37212)

TEXAS  
Amarillo (79106)  
Austin (78741)  
Big Spring (79720)  
Bonham (75418)  
Dallas (75216)  
El Paso (79925)  
Houston (77030)  
Kerrville (78028)  
Marlin (76661)  
San Antonio (78284)  
Temple (76504)  
Waco (76711)

UTAH  
Salt Lake City (84148)

VERMONT  
White River Junction (05009)

VIRGINIA  
Hampton (23667)  
Richmond (23249)  
Salem (24153)

WASHINGTON  
American Lake (Tacoma 98493)  
Seattle (98108)  
Spokane (99205)  
Walla Walla (99362)

WEST VIRGINIA  
Beckley (25801)  
Clarksburg (26301)  
Huntington (25704)  
Martinsburg (25401)

WISCONSIN  
Madison (53705)  
Milwaukee (53295)  
Tomah (54660)

WYOMING  
Cheyenne (82001)  
Sheridan (82801)

# 105 Historically Black Colleges and Universities

## and Nearby VA Medical Centers (VAMCs)

VAMC	INSTITUTION	LOCATION	VAMC	INSTITUTION	LOCATION
ALABAMA Birmingham Montgomery Tuscaloosa	Alabama A&M University Alabama State University Bishop State Community College Concordia College Fredd State Technical College J.F. Drake Technical College Lawson State Community College Miles College Oakwood College Selma University Shelton State Community College-Fredd Stillman College Talladega College Trenholm State Technical College Tuskegee University	Normal Montgomery Mobile Selma Tuscaloosa Huntsville Birmingham Birmingham Huntsville Selma Tuscaloosa Tuscaloosa Talladega Montgomery Tuskegee	NORTH CAROLINA Asheville Durham Fayetteville Salisbury	Barber-Scotia College Bennett College Elizabeth City State University Fayetteville State University Johnson C. Smith University Livingstone College North Carolina A&T State University North Carolina Central University Saint Augustine's College Shaw University Winston-Salem State University	Concord Greensboro Elizabeth City Fayetteville Charlotte Salisbury Greensboro Durham Raleigh Raleigh Winston-Salem
ARKANSAS Fayetteville Little Rock	Arkansas Baptist College Philander Smith College Shorter College University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	Little Rock Little Rock North Little Rock Pine Bluff	OHIO Chillicothe Cincinnati Cleveland/Brecksville Columbus Dayton	Central State University Wilberforce University	Wilberforce Wilberforce
DELAWARE Wilmington	Delaware State College University	Dover	OKLAHOMA Muskogee Oklahoma City	Langston University	Langston
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Washington	Howard University University of D.C.	Washington Washington	PENNSYLVANIA Altoona Butler Coatesville Erie Lebanon Philadelphia Pittsburgh (HD) Pittsburgh (UD) Wilkes-Barre	Cheyney University Lincoln University	Cheyney Lincoln
FLORIDA Bay Pines Gainesville Lake City Miami	Bethune Cookman College Edward Waters College Florida A&M University Florida Memorial College	Daytona Beach Jacksonville Tallahassee Miami	SOUTH CAROLINA Charleston Columbia	Allen University Benedict College Clafin College Clinton Junior College Denmark Technical College Morris College South Carolina State College Voorhees College	Columbia Columbia Orangeburg Rock Hill Denmark Sumter Orangeburg Denmark
GEORGIA Atlanta Augusta Dublin	Albany State College Clark Atlanta University Fort Valley State College Interdenominational Theological Center Morehouse College Morehouse School of Medicine Morris Brown College Paine College Savannah State University Spelman College	Albany Atlanta Atlanta Fort Valley Atlanta Atlanta Atlanta Atlanta Augusta Savannah Atlanta	TENNESSEE Memphis Mountain Home Nashville	Fisk University Knoxville College Lane College Le Moyne-Owen College Meharry Medical College Tennessee State University	Nashville Knoxville Jackson Jackson Nashville Nashville
KENTUCKY Lexington Louisville	Kentucky State University	Frankfort	TEXAS Amarillo Big Spring Bonham Dallas Dallas El Paso Houston Kerrville Marlin San Antonio Temple Waco	Huston-Tillotson College Jarvis Christian College Paul Quinn College Prairie View A&M University St. Phillip's College Southwestern Christian College Texas College Texas Southern University Wiley College	Austin Hawkins Dallas Dallas Prairie View San Antonio Terrell Tyler Houston Marshall
LOUISIANA Alexandria New Orleans Shreveport	Dillard University Grambling State University Southern University & A&M University Southern University System Southern University at New Orleans Southern University at Shreveport/Bossier City Xavier University of New Orleans	New Orleans Grambling Baton Rouge Baton Rouge New Orleans Shreveport New Orleans	VIRGINIA Hampton Richmond Salem	Hampton University Norfolk State University Saint Paul's College Virginia State University Virginia Union University	Hampton Norfolk Lawrenceville Petersburg Richmond
MARYLAND Baltimore Fort Howard Perry Point	Bowie State University Coppin State College Morgan State University University of Maryland, Eastern Shore	Bowie Baltimore Baltimore Princess Anne	WEST VIRGINIA Beckley Clarksburg Huntington Martinsburg	Bluefield State College West Virginia State College	Bluefield Institute
MICHIGAN Allen Park Ann Arbor Battle Creek Iron Mountain Saginaw	Lewis College of Business	Detroit	U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS	University of the Virgin Islands	St. Thomas
MISSISSIPPI Biloxi/Gulfport Jackson	Alcorn State University Coahoma Junior College Hinds Community College Jackson State University Mary Holmes College Mississippi Valley State University Rust College Tougaloo College	Lorman Clarksdale Utica Jackson West Point Itta Bena Holly Springs Tougaloo	<i>VA medical facilities are located in all 50 states, plus Puerto Rico and the Philippines.</i>		
MISSOURI Columbia Kansas City Poplar Bluff St. Louis	Harris-Stowe State College Lincoln University	St. Louis Jefferson City	 Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration Management Support Office EEO/Affirmative Employment Team Washington, DC 20420		