

VA POST-BACCALAUREATE NURSE RESIDENCY

1. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA), in collaboration with the Office of Nursing Services (ONS), solicits applications for VA Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency programs. This announcement provides information and procedures for those applications. **Programs must be accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing (CCNE) or be in the process of obtaining such accreditation.** This is a pilot program with funding planned for 5-6 training sites and a maximum of 30 residents. **Residents must have successfully completed a baccalaureate or master's level entry to practice program accredited by the CCNE or the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC).** Funding decisions will be based primarily on the quality of the proposals submitted. Initial funding is planned for 3 years depending upon availability of funding and demonstrated program success. Selected sites will be provided funding and trainee positions effective September 1, 2012 (Academic Year 2012-2013).

2. BACKGROUND

VHA's statutory health professions education mission enables VA to enhance the clinical learning and practice environment, recruit and retain high quality professional staff, and provide excellent care to Veterans. Residency programs ensure a supervised transition to autonomous and competent clinical practice. Historically, accredited residencies have been funded for Medicine, Dentistry, Psychology, Pharmacy and other clinical professions, but not for Nursing. As of 2009, accreditation for post-baccalaureate nurse residency programs (enrolling baccalaureate-prepared or master's level entry to practice-prepared nurses) is available through the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). CCNE provides guidance and standards for accreditation through the CCNE Residency Accreditation Committee. Standards may be accessed at <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Accreditation/pdf/resstandards08.pdf> and procedures for preparing and applying for accreditation are available at <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Accreditation/pdf/ProceduresResidency.pdf>

3. POLICY

a. The Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA/10A2D) maintains overall responsibility for administration of VA's health professions clinical training programs and oversees the VA Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency in collaboration with VA's Office of Nursing Services (ONS).

b. All positions requested must be for one year full-time appointments and solely for residency training. Residents are expected to complete training within one year.

c. Facilities must demonstrate the ability to provide quality residency training. The residency program must be accredited by CCNE or become accredited by CCNE within 1 year of funding. The application for approval as a VA training site must include a realistic plan and timetable to obtain CCNE accreditation. **Sites that fail to obtain**

CCNE accreditation within 1 year of the start of the training program will not be funded for subsequent years.

d. Residents must be:

- (1) Graduates of baccalaureate or master's level entry to practice programs accredited by Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC).
- (2) Citizens of the United States.

e. OAA will provide approved VA facilities with trainee stipends, Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) contributions, and health and life insurance contributions.

f. Continuation of funding will depend on availability of funds as well as successful implementation of the proposed programs.

g. Collaboration with an affiliated School/College of Nursing is strongly encouraged. Facilities collaborating with another academic institution must follow the guidelines in VA Manual M-8 Part 1 Chapter 2, Affiliations with Academic Institutions, or successor policies.

4. **ELIGIBILITY**

a. **General Requirements.** The nature of the training program, populations served, training experiences provided, and qualifications and skills of faculty and registered professional nursing staff must be appropriate to the VA mission **and** meet CCNE standards. A teaching partnership between the VA facility and a School/College of Nursing is strongly encouraged. Clinical settings must provide a range of experiences in the application of nursing science and practice, provide exposure to patients of varying backgrounds and cultures, and foster graduated responsibility in carrying out professional functions.

b. **Specific Requirements.**

(1) **Program Sponsorship.** The accreditation sponsor for the VA Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency is the VA facility.

(2) **Academic Partnership.** The VA facility, in collaboration with a School/College of Nursing, as applicable, must ensure the availability of qualified faculty and registered professional nursing staff to enable the residency program to achieve its mission, goals and expected outcomes.

(3) **VA Facility Commitment.** The VA facility and VISN must demonstrate ongoing support for developing and sustaining an outstanding learning environment. The Medical Center Director, Nurse Executive and Designated Education Officer (DEO) must demonstrate a strong commitment to the residency program. Program faculty, teaching facilities and resources must be available to enable the program to achieve its mission, goals and expected program outcomes.

(4) **Residency Director.** A Residency Director must be designated and be clinically and academically qualified to provide effective leadership to the program in achieving its mission, goals and expected outcomes.

(5) **Curriculum.** The curriculum must meet established CCNE standards.

(6) **Trainee Qualifications.** Per CCNE requirements, residents in this program must hold an entry to nursing practice degree (at either the bachelor's or master's level).

(7) **Residency Completion Certificate.** Upon completion of this program graduates will receive a Residency Completion Certificate from the Residency Program.

c. Site Characteristics. Applications must demonstrate:

(1) Patient workload and clinical diversity to support the proposed training program.

(2) Experience in providing health professions education.

(3) Administrative infrastructure to support the program, including adequate space, equipment (computer, printer, copier, etc) and clerical support to enable the success of the program.

(4) Sound strategies for resident and program evaluation.

(5) Experienced faculty and registered professional nursing staff for teaching, supervision, mentoring, role modeling, and administrative functions.

(6) Residency Director with protected time to manage the training program and related academic activities. Protected time should be explicitly noted in the facility support letter. A Residency Director generally spends 30-50% of time in training related activities, depending on the size and complexity of the training program.

(7) Sufficient release time from clinical activities for faculty and registered professional nursing staff to teach and supervise trainees.

(8) Where applicable, Nursing School/College's commitment to provide faculty appointments for qualified VA registered professional nursing staff with central roles in residency program development, implementation, evaluation and oversight.

(9) Facility's commitment to provide salary and other support for affiliated faculty with important roles in residency program implementation and evaluation. Dual appointments, Intergovernmental Personnel Agreements (IPAs) and other contractual arrangements should be considered.

(10) Facility's commitment to obtain residency program accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Education for Nurses (CCNE) within 1 year of initiation of the residency program.

d. Annual Reports. Funded facilities are expected to submit an annual report of residency activities and outcomes. At a minimum, this should include applicant/enrollee

demographics, satisfaction with the program by residents and faculty, job placement information about graduating residents, results of accreditation surveys, lessons learned and changes proposed for the following year.

5. APPOINTMENT AND PAY

- a. Appointments will be made under 38 U.S.C. 7405(b) (1) for a period not to exceed one year and one day.
- b. The per annum stipend for nurse residents is \$55,000. Since this is a pilot program, at this time there is no additional locality pay. OAA will provide approved facilities with stipends, VA's share (7.65%) of Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) contributions, and VA's share of health and life insurance premiums.
- c. Other expenses connected with trainee recruitment, educational activities, or travel must be funded from other sources. Facilities are encouraged to consider utilizing local funds received through the VERA Education Supplement.
- d. General Schedule annual and sick leave policy applies to residents in this program (Reference: VHA Manual M-8, Part II, Chapter 2, Paragraph 2.14).
- e. Residents will be protected from personal liability while providing professional services at a VA health care facility under the Federal Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act, 28 U.S.C. 2679 (b)-(d).

6. EVALUATION AND OUTCOMES

Evaluation is a critical component of any pilot program. The primary responsibility for evaluation belongs with the local facility, with support from OAA and ONS, as appropriate. Evaluation methods must be in place to assess residents' performance. The evaluation components along with potential instruments are as follows: clinical skills competency (Global Skills Assessment); graduate nurse experience (Casey-Fink Graduate Nurse Experience Survey); autonomy (Gerber Control over Practice); job satisfaction (McCloskey-Mueller RN Job Satisfaction). All evaluation areas should be covered. The specific instruments required for the pilot evaluation will be discussed with the selected sites prior to initiation of the residency. Additional evaluation instruments may be employed at the discretion of individual programs. Evaluation methods should also include statistics on resident satisfaction and job placement, including resident retention rate within VA.

7. BUDGET

The resident receives a stipend and benefits while in training status. The annual stipend is based on current post-graduate rates plus locality pay. The facility is responsible for administrative expenses, CCNE fees, residency director and faculty salaries, and evaluation expenses.

8. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS.

a. A non-binding Letter of Intent (LOI) to submit a proposal must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affiliations by 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time on October 1, 2011. The LOI must be no more than two pages in length. It must provide the name and contact number of the proposed residency director, describe the program's current accreditation or application status, whether a teaching partnership with a School/College of Nursing is planned, and briefly address the key items listed in Section 4. The letter should be emailed in Word or PDF format to Mary.Dougherty@va.gov.

b. The LOI will be used by OAA for planning purposes and for establishing a database of proposal information. Facilities and programs will receive feedback on their LOIs by November 7, 2011 to assist in the preparation of full applications. LOIs will not be scored and programs will not be prioritized on the basis of the information provided in the LOI.

c. The full proposal should be submitted electronically via OAA's web-based proposal application system; full submission instructions will be provided with the response to the LOI. **The full proposal must be received in OAA by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on January 30, 2012.** The core narrative of the application may not exceed 15 single-spaced pages, excluding the transmittal letter and appendices. Longer applications will not be reviewed. Pages must have at least one-inch margins all around and the font size must be no smaller than 11 point.

d. The core document of the full proposal (15 pages or less) must include the following elements. Please follow this outline explicitly.

(1) Introductory Information

(a) Location and Name of Facility.

(b) Type of Proposal (facility has a fully accredited program, facility is in process of applying for accreditation, or facility has not started accreditation process as yet).

(c) Number of funded residency positions requested. Programs are strongly encouraged to enroll at least 4 residents each year over the duration of the pilot. A maximum of 6 residency positions will be supported at each of the pilot sites annually.

(d) Names and email addresses of individuals to be notified of proposal review outcome.

(2) Background Statement

(a) Identify how the VA facility would benefit from a Graduate Nurse Residency. Describe the existing relationship and state of partnership between the facility and the College of Nursing, as applicable. Describe staffing, recruitment and retention of staff, ongoing training/education of staff, and desirability of the VA facility as a training site.

(3) Training Program Description

- (a) Training Program Mission Statement. State the purpose of the program, including philosophy, goals, and objectives. Relate the proposed curriculum to the CCNE requirements, making sure that all necessary elements are covered.
- (b) Methodology. Describe the clinical competencies that will be emphasized in the curriculum.
- (c) Program Evaluation. Specify how the training program's effectiveness for meeting its training goals and objectives will be evaluated.
- (d) Sustainability. Describe the strategies that will be put into place to assure the program will continue to thrive beyond the pilot.
- e. Appendices (20 pages or less, not included in the 15 page limit) should include:
 - (1) Transmittal letter from the facility Director, to include:
 - (a) Support for the program including release time for the Residency Director and program faculty.
 - (b) Current accreditation status, or accreditation plan and specific timeline for receiving accreditation from CCNE.
 - (c) Facility's agreement to pay CCNE accreditation fees (new applicant fee, \$7500; site visit fee, \$5250; and annual fee, \$5,000).
 - (2) Letters of support from the facility Nurse Executive, Designated Education Officer (DEO), Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Leadership, and School/College of Nursing Dean, as applicable.
 - (3) List of key staff who will be involved in the program, including names of Residency Director, key faculty, and consultants.
 - (4) Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae of the Residency Director.

9. REVIEW PROCESS

The merit of applications will be assessed by an Ad Hoc Review Committee, appointed by the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer in collaboration with the Chief Nursing Officer. Applications will be reviewed within the context of CCNE Accreditation criteria and relevant VA standards. **Facilities without an accredited residency program must demonstrate readiness for obtaining accreditation.**

The committee will evaluate specific items in the application that reflect:

a.	Evidence of a commitment from the VA facility and VISN to establish an accredited Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency; including availability of support resources such as faculty, support staff, office space, library support, and computer access.	15 points
b.	The program's educational goals and objectives, including both cognitive and technical skills. Specific competencies to be developed must be described.	15 points
c.	Quality of training to be offered, including the curriculum and training	20 points

	settings. Curriculum content and teaching methodology must be explicitly described.	
d.	Quality of the evaluation plan, including trainee and program assessment. Evaluation design and methodology must be explicitly described.	20 points
e.	Quality of the teaching faculty, including background, experience, and roles at the facility and affiliated School/College of Nursing.	10 points
f.	Evidence of a clear understanding of the purpose of the program; including how it will support the Secretary's Health Care Transformation initiatives and nursing education nationally.	10 points
g.	Plans for sustaining the program following completion of the 3-year pilot.	10 points
	TOTAL	100 points

NOTE: Sites that are already accredited will have preference over sites not yet accredited by receiving 10 bonus points. Sites with established Office of Nursing Service (ONS) RN Transition to Practice programs will receive 5 bonus points. Sites with established Veterans Affairs Learning Opportunity Residency (VALOR) programs will receive 2 bonus points.

10. SCHEDULE

August 15, 2011	Program announcement released
October 1, 2011	LOI due to OAA
November 7, 2011	LOI feedback due to facilities/program directors
Jan 30, 2012	Full application due to OAA.
Apr 30, 2012	Notification of selected sites
Sept, 2012	Initiation of residency

11. CONTACT PERSON

For information concerning this program announcement, contact Mary Dougherty DNSc., Director, Veterans Affairs Nursing Academy (10A2D), at 202.461.9498 or mary.dougherty@va.gov

12. NATIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW

Since this is a national pilot program, its continuation beyond three years is not guaranteed, but is dependent on availability of funding and measurable outcomes,

including residency completion rate and VA recruitment rate. OAA and ONS will conduct the formal review to determine continuation of the program.