



VIRGINIA
HEALTH CARE
FOUNDATION

707 East Main Street, Suite 1350 • Richmond, VA 23219 • www.vhcf.org
Phone: (804) 828-5804 • Fax: (804) 828-4370 • email: info@vhcf.org

Psych NP Scholarship Program Guidelines October 2013

Overview

The Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF) has established a special scholarship program (*VHCF Scholars*) to underwrite the costs of tuition and fees for health safety net Nurse Practitioners (*NP*) who return to school to obtain a post master's certificate as Psych-Mental Health NPs (*PMHNPs*).

Program Purposes

1. To increase the number of primary care providers with behavioral health education and training working in Virginia's health safety-net.
2. To create a scholarship program for nurse practitioners (*NPs*) interested in obtaining post-masters certificates (*PMC*) in psych-mental health (*PMH*), who will in return work in a Virginia health safety-net setting.

Application Process & Conditions

1. NPs will apply to the accredited School of Nursing (*SOM*) of their choice for admission (*eligible applicants will already have master's degrees in nursing*)
2. Once admitted, they will apply to VHCF for the scholarship program, which provides payment of tuition and fees to the university where they enroll.
3. Scholarship recipients will agree to certain conditions that will be described in detail and agreed upon by contract.
4. Upon completion of the PMC program, scholarship recipients will be required to work in a safety net setting in Virginia for two years.

Program Guidelines

A. Eligibility Criteria

The applicant:

1. Must have a master's degree in nursing (*verified by their admission to a post-master's program*)
2. Must be a Virginia-licensed FNP, ANP, WHNP or PNP (*verified through the Virginia Department of Health Professions' online listing*)
3. Must be accepted into a Psych-Mental Health Post-Masters Certificate (PMC) program, accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
4. Must not be concurrently enrolled or planning to enroll in a doctoral nursing program, as the service commitment must begin immediately after PMC program completion
5. Must be enrolled in the program full-time or follow the school's plan of study to complete the program in the shortest time possible, as defined by the SON/University.
6. Must not have any existing service obligation, such as National Health Service Corps or other state or federal loan/scholarship programs (*applicant will attest to this*)
7. Will be given preference if attending one of the three Virginia schools with PMH PMC programs--Shenandoah, UVA or VCU (*will submit evidence of admission from the SON*)
 - Non-VA schools may be considered after verification that the SON has an accredited (*as above*) PMC program, and that the decision is related to the geographic location of the applicant
8. Will be given preference if employed as a full-time clinician in a health safety net setting at the time of application (*will submit employer verification*)
 - Health safety net is defined as free clinics, community health centers, health departments, and other providers of health services to the uninsured (*does not include Community Services Boards*)

9. May be a volunteer, if there are special circumstances and substantial volunteer hours at a safety net site over time (*at least 12 months*) are documented
10. Must have an agreement with the employer to provide flexible work time to attend the program and for employment in the PMHNP role after its completion.
 - If the current employer is unwilling to do this and the applicant is willing to work at another clinic, this may be considered.

B. Conditions: During the PMC Program

The recipient:

1. Must sign a permission/release of information form for VHCF to receive grade reports and set up business office accounts for payment of tuition and fees
2. Must maintain full-time enrollment, as defined by the SON program; only courses required for program completion will be counted toward enrollment status
3. Must document acceptable progression from semester to semester (*B average; pass for all clinical courses*) to receive payment for the next semester. Unofficial grade reports will be submitted to VHCF by the student within two (2) weeks of the end of each semester, with official reports following when available.
4. Must notify VHCF program manager in writing (*email acceptable*) of any changes in personal information (*e.g., email, address, name, etc.*)
5. Must notify VHCF program manager in writing (*email acceptable*) of any issues with enrollment/ progression within two (2) weeks of the issue arising; issues include: repeat of any course work; change in completion date; leave of absence approved by SON; withdrawal or dismissal; change in full-time status; voluntary withdrawal from any course (*complete and submit VHCF form*).
6. Will have full-time, in-state tuition as established by each program paid by VHCF. Fees may vary from program to program: VHCF will pay those standard fees required by the program, such as academic support services,

administrative fees, computer fees, health insurance or malpractice insurance (*if mandatory*), or laboratory fees. Fees not included: parking, life insurance, accident insurance, educational association fees, late charges/penalty fees, and attorney fees.

C. Conditions: After Program Completion

The program graduate:

1. Must agree to work full-time in a Virginia health safety net clinic as a PMHNP for two (2) years after program completion (*date that the student receives written notice that s/he has successfully completed all course requirements*)
2. Must begin the service commitment within three (3) months after program completion
3. Must work full time in the PMHNP clinical role to meet the service obligation
4. Must obtain national certification as a PMHNP through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
5. Must obtain licensure in Virginia as a PMHNP, once nationally certified
6. Will receive credit toward the service obligation after obtaining national certification and state licensure as a PMHNP and starting to provide clinical services at a safety-net site in Virginia
7. Will document the official start date with employer verification of the date of employment; and, assuming completion of hours needed, the end date will be exactly 2 years later (*e.g., 9/1/13→8/31/15*).
8. Will work full-time, at least 40 hours per week, with no more than 8 hours per week of non-clinical/ administrative time
 - Only 25% of clinical effort can be devoted to telemedicine, and is only acceptable if there is a live interaction between client and clinician. This requirement can be waived if circumstances require it.
9. May be absent from work no more than 35 full-time days (*280 hours*) per year for vacation, sick, personal, or professional leave (*without obtaining a temporary suspension of the service commitment from VHCF*)
10. Must report service hours and clinical practice characteristics to VHCF on a quarterly basis during repayment of the service commitment (*VHCF form*).

D. Conditions: Variances, Breach of Contract & Repayment

The recipient/program graduate:

1. Must agree to procedures related to requests for temporary suspension in program enrollment or service commitment (*VHCF form*)
 - Acceptable reasons for requesting a temporary suspension include: (a) leave of absence for medical or personal reasons (*up to one year*); (b) maternity/ paternity/adoption leave (*up to 12 weeks*); and, (c) call to active military duty.
2. Must agree to procedures related to requests for permanent waiver in program enrollment or service commitment. (*VHCF form*)
 - A permanent waiver relieves the recipient of all or part of the service obligation. It may be granted only if the recipient demonstrates that compliance with his/her obligation is permanently unconscionable.
3. Must agree to policies related to repayment of funds if the contract is breached by failure to complete the academic program or failure to begin or complete the service commitment.
 - a. If the contract is *breached during the academic program or prior to graduation from the program*, all tuition and fees paid by VHCF must be repaid within three (3) years, with interest accruing at the prime rate from the date of default.
 - b. If the contract is *breached related to the service commitment*, all tuition and fees paid by VHCF must be repaid within three (3) years, with interest accruing at the prime rate from the date of default, and liquidated damages added in the amount of 50% of the total amount owed.
 - c. If repayment is not completed within 3 years, the debt will be considered delinquent, reported to a commercial credit reporting agency and may be referred to a collection agency for follow-up.

For further information, please call VHCF at #804-828-5804; application materials will be available at the VHCF website by November 1, 2013.