

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

The following constitutes an agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE/SEIU) concerning VHA Directive 1426.01 (2) Employee Incentive Scholarship Program, dated September 16, 2019, Amended February 06, 2023.

1. Each facility, VISN, and the Department program office shall provide a copy of the program announcement, and any subsequent updates, listing the occupations for which the facility would accept Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP) applications. This list will include the position name, job series, and grade where applicable.
2. The Department will meet labor obligations, to include notices, proposed implementation and/or changes of policy, for EISP policies drafted and implemented at the VISN or local facility level in accordance with Article 13 of the Master Agreement.
3. When the facility chooses to deny an Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP) application, the applicant is notified in writing. After acceptance in the EISP, all participant actions that constitute a breach of the EISP agreement will be handled in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 7675 and VHA Directive 1426.01(2), Employee Incentive Scholarship Program. Denials may be appealed in accordance with Article 23-Training and Career Development, Section C; or Article 40-The Grievance Procedure. If a scholarship applicant is denied at the local level, they would file the grievance with their Facility Director. If the applicant is denied at the program office level, then the grievance would go to the Director of Scholarships and Clinical Education (S&CE). If the grievance is not resolved at the S&CE level, then the grievance would go to the Director of Workforce Recruitment and Retention. The applicant can also utilize the EEO process if applicable.
4. In the event of a breach of agreement, a participant may request a waiver of a participant's financial liability or service obligation.
5. Any employee who submits an application requesting participation in VA National Education for Employees Program (VANEED) must have a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale. If accepted into VANEED, these participants must maintain or exceed the minimum GPA set by the school to maintain an acceptable level of academic standing within the specific program for which VANEED was approved.

6. At the VISNs and or the local levels, the Employee Incentive Scholarship Program Operating Committee will ensure a NAGE Union representative, designated by the local President, is placed on this Committee.

7. If a participant does not complete the service obligation, for any reason, the participant is financially liable to the United States (38 U.S.C. 7675). However, a participant may seek a waiver of the financial liability by written request to the Under Secretary for Health or designee. VHA Directive 1426.01(2) Appendix D provides directions for requesting a waiver and provides waiver processing procedures.

8. Disciplinary Actions will be removed from the Employee's Personnel Records in accordance with Article 37- Discipline and Adverse Actions of the NAGE Master Agreement.

9. Disciplinary Adverse Actions that are two (2) years old or older will be removed from the Employee's Personnel Records in accordance with Article 37- Discipline and Adverse Actions of the NAGE Master Agreement. The program office will update the online scholarship and clinical education application portal to provide applicants, participants, and facility coordinators access to the current and prior versions of VHA Directive 1426.01(2).

10. The program office will update the online scholarship and clinical education application portal to provide participants access to the current version of VHA Directive 1426.01(2) Appendix D: Waivers and Suspension.

11. All local bargaining will be in accordance with Article 13 -National Consultation Rights and Mid-Term Bargaining for local processes and procedures relevant to this MOU and Directive.

12. A signed copy of this MOU shall be provided to NAGE at the national level. NAGE local union presidents will be provided a copy of this MOU within five days of local management receiving a signed copy.

13. A copy of this signed MOU will be placed on the LMR website by management within fourteen calendar days.

FOR THE AGENCY

2/7/2024

X Sonja Prince-Ward

Sonja Prince-Ward

Labor Relations Specialist

Signed by: SONJA PRINCE-WARD

FOR THE UNION

1/18/2024

X Dr. Ginger L. Andrews for

Mark D. Bailey, Sr.

NAGE National Department

Signed by: Department of Veterans Affairs

2/6/2024

X Brandon T. Hickok

Brandon Hickok

Labor Consultant, VHA

Signed by: BRANDON HICKOK