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# News Release

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## VA creates scholarship program to help aspiring VA mental health professionals

**WASHINGTON** — Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it will establish a Vet Center (Readjustment Counseling Service) Scholarship Program to assist individuals pursuing graduate degrees in psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy, or mental health counseling.

VA expects to award scholarships in the summer of 2023, providing funding to cover up to two years of graduate studies for individuals pursuing these degrees. Upon completion of their degrees, these mental health professionals will then serve full time for a period of six years at one of VA's 300 [Vet Centers](#) across the country, specifically, in underserved areas that need additional mental health professionals and in states with a per-capita population of more than 5% Veterans.

"In 300 communities across the country, Vet Centers provide Veterans, service members, and their families with quick and easy access to the mental health care they need and deserve," said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. "These scholarships will help VA ensure all Veterans and service members — including those in historically underserved areas — have access to Vet Centers with highly-qualified, trained and compassionate staff."

Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers that provide a wide range of social and psychological services, including professional counseling to eligible Veterans, service members, including National Guard and Reserve components and their families. Vet Center counselors and outreach staff, many of whom are Veterans themselves, are experienced and prepared to discuss the tragedies of war, loss, grief and transition after trauma. In Fiscal Year 2022, 286,907 Veterans, service members (including members of the National Guard and Reserves) and their families received counseling at VA's 300 Vet Centers, totaling nearly 1.34 million visits and outreach contacts.

Today, VA posted a final rule for public inspection in the Federal Register [86 FR 81094](#) to create this scholarship program. The rule originates from the [Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019](#) which created the scholarship program as an incentive to train more individuals in psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy or mental health counseling. It is also a part of the Biden-Harris administration's broader efforts to support Veterans and improve mental health care access for all.

-Learn more about [Vet Centers](#).

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