

Higher Education Mental Health Workforce Pilot Round Two (2024-2026 Biennium) Request for Proposals FAQs

This document contains questions and answers pertaining to the Round Two Higher Education Mental Health Workforce Pilot Program request for proposals.

Budget language continuing the pilot for the 2024-2026 biennium:

<https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/item/2024/2/HB6001/Enrolled/1/132/>

“P. Out of this appropriation, \$500,000 the first year and \$500,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to support a mental health workforce pilot at institutions of higher education in consultation with the Virginia Health Care Foundation. The pilot shall support the costs of required supervision for graduates of Master of Social Work and programs seeking licensure. Eligible institutions include public institutions of higher education operating in Virginia. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall report the outcomes of the pilot annually to the Governor and General Assembly.”

Question 1: If an institution requests funds for 2.5 years but their candidate completes hours for licensure in 2, can they use the remaining funds to support that candidate until the funds are exhausted?

Answer 1: The program is intended to “support the costs of required supervision for candidates seeking licensure.” Once the candidate is licensed, the dual purpose of the program has been fulfilled and grant funds cannot be used to pay the salary/benefits of the licensed clinical social worker or licensed professional counselor.

Question 2: In the budget/workplan, can there be a "summer pause" where the candidate works for a community service board or private practice to accumulate hours during the "slow time?" Funds would not be used during that time, and it would, in essence, be a summer break.

Answer 2: As long as no state funds are being expended during that time if the candidate is working elsewhere. It is also acceptable for the candidate to work part time at each place (i.e., part time at both the institution and an outside employer) so long as state funds only support work at the institution. These cases are allowable as long as the record of work hours is maintained, and state funds are only used for the candidate’s work at the college or university.

Question 3: Can a current (Round One) grantee who is submitting a new (Round Two) proposal, use no more than six months of funds to support their current candidate until licensure?

Answer 3: Yes, an existing pilot site/grantee may use up to - but no more than - six months of grant funds to support their current candidate until licensure. The bulk of the funds should be used to support the new candidate.

Question 4: Due to staff bandwidth needed to fulfill current (Round One) grant obligations (clinical hours completed and licensure obtained by current candidate), can our Round Two proposal include a hire date in fall 2025 or spring 2026?

Answer 4: If a current grantee receives a Round Two pilot grant, up to six months of funds can support a current grantee at the existing pilot site/institution. Given that the awards will be made in August 2025 and hiring is optimal close to graduation, all Round Two grantees are expected to have hired candidates as soon as practicable. Fulfillment of existing grant obligations should not delay the hiring process for FY 25.

Question 5: We have a current open job posting for an unlicensed (Resident) therapist and are looking to hire in August. Can we apply the new grant money to the new hire, if our proposal is selected?

Answer 5: Yes, as long as the terms of the employment contract are consistent (are not inconsistent) with the terms of the grant.