

## **VA Participation in 2026-2027 Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program**

The Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program, funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation with support from West Health, is a unique opportunity for professionals in health and aging to receive the experience and skills necessary to make a positive contribution to the development and implementation of health policies that affect older Americans. VA employees have successfully participated in this program since 2013 and are encouraged to apply for the 2026-2027 cohort.

VA employees who apply for and are selected for the year-long program would remain based at their local VA institution but work on a policy project that may involve brief placement(s) throughout the year at relevant sites.

**The deadline for submission of complete application is Monday, March 16, 2026.**

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### **What is The Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program?**

**This one-year mentored policy program provides:**

- Formal sessions in Washington, DC and other locations addressing health and aging policy along with general career development and professional enrichment content
- Several mentors identified during the course of Orientation based on discussions with the Directors of the Program and Fellow's area of interest to assist the Fellow's policy and career development
- Participation in an ongoing community of peers and mentors to advance knowledge and practice
- The program curriculum includes an orientation program in Washington, DC that runs for approximately 5 weeks between the end of October through the beginning of December. The program does not schedule sessions on weekends or over Thanksgiving.

In addition, there is a 2-day leadership summit in the fall, a 1.5-day communications workshop in February/March, a 1.5-day symposium in the spring, and a 2-day Capstone at the conclusion of the fellowship year. During the course of the year, VA Fellows are otherwise at their home institutions with an expectation that approximately 20% of the Fellow's time will be focused on their policy collaboration/project for the year. The travel expenses for these activities will be provided to the participant by The Health and Aging Policy Fellowship.

VA employees selected for the Health and Aging Policy Fellows will participate fully in the program. More information about the program can be found at <http://www.healthandagingpolicy.org/>.

### **Who is eligible?**

VA applicants must apply directly to and be selected by the Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program through a national competition based on the applicant's commitment to health and aging issues, leadership potential, and interest in impacting policy. The program has a broad interdisciplinary focus: Fellows have included physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, dieticians, healthcare administrators, epidemiologists, economists, and lawyers from academic and practice settings, spanning career stages from newly minted PhDs to senior professors and community leaders. The

program is open to U.S. citizens at all career stages, with a focus on those early or midway through their careers.

VA applicants must have a paid VA appointment prior to starting. Part-time VA appointments are acceptable to meet eligibility criteria. Applicants may be VA staff or trainees (e.g., Advanced Fellows.) This program is a curriculum enrichment opportunity for VA Fellows and does not include any supplemental salary support for the Fellow's time or effort. All VA applicants must demonstrate that their underlying VA position will allow them the time to participate in this program.

## **What is the application process?**

### **Program Application**

The deadline for submission of the application materials to The Health and Aging Policy Fellowship Program National Program Office (HAPF NPO) is **March 16, 2026**.

Prior to applying, VA applicants must secure local VA leadership support and commitment for protection of time needed to participate in the program.

\*Please see instructions on how to apply, as well as the link to the official application form here: <https://www.healthandagingpolicy.org/fellowship-application/apply-here/>.

All reference letters should be submitted via the Google Form application by March 16, 2026.

Please be sure to fill out the application in its entirety and include all required materials, as incomplete applications will not be considered.

## **Process for Travel Funding for VA Participants in the Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program**

The Health and Aging Policy Fellowship Program is offering most travel expenses. Participants will work directly with the HAPF NPO leaders to arrange travel, expenses, and reimbursement. All reimbursement will be made directly from the HAPF NPO to the Fellow and will not involve exchange of funds by the VA. VA Fellows must complete and submit VA Form 0893 to the Office of General Counsel (OGC) for their review and approval in conjunction with that of local VA Medical Center leadership to allow non-Federal support from HAPF in connection with official travel to include: lodging, transportation, meals, or conference fees.

## **HAPF Information Sessions for the 2026-2027 Class**

If you are interested in becoming a Health & Aging Policy Fellow and have questions, information sessions via Zoom will be offered on the following dates and times between December 2025 and February 2026 (**all times are EST**). Please click on the date you would like to attend, and you will be redirected to a Zoom registration page. Once you have registered, you will receive an email confirmation from Zoom containing the meeting link.

[Tuesday, December 2, 2025 from 2:00-3:00 PM](#)

[Thursday, December 18, 2025 from 1:00-2:00 PM](#)

[\\*Monday, January 12, 2026 from 2:00-3:00 PM](#) - *\*Session focused on the VA track*

[Wednesday, January 28, 2026 from 1:00-2:00 PM](#)

**Tuesday, February 10, 2026 from 2:00-3:00 PM**

**Monday, February 23, 2026 from 1:00-2:00 PM**

For more information on the Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program, the information sessions listed above, or the application process, please contact the Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program at: [hapfell@nyspi.columbia.edu](mailto:hapfell@nyspi.columbia.edu).