



**ADMISSIONS, ENROLLMENT, AND GRADUATION TRENDS IN VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAMS**

This update presents data for the 85<sup>1</sup> vocational nursing (VN) programs and the military-based VN program<sup>1</sup> in Texas during the 2021 reporting year, including:

- 81 generic programs
- 4 Multiple Entry/Exit Programs (MEEPs)

The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) collected data using the 2021 Board of Nursing’s (BON) Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) that was available online as of October 4, 2021. The reporting period was academic year (AY) 2020-2021 (September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021) unless otherwise noted. TCNWS collaborated with the BON in the design and dissemination of the survey.

<sup>1</sup>Data collected from the military-based VN program were analyzed separately and can be found on page 5.

**Qualified Applications to Vocational Nursing Programs**

Table 1 lists data on qualified applications<sup>2</sup> and admissions to VN programs from 2011 through 2021.

- Seats for new students<sup>3,4</sup> decreased by 675 seats between 2020 and 2021.
- Qualified applications were those that met all criteria for admission based on the standards set by individual programs.
  - There were 8,237 qualified applications in 2021, an increase of 1.7% from 2020.<sup>5</sup>
  - Of the qualified applications, admission was offered to 6,713, or 81.5%.
- The number of qualified applications not offered admission (QANA) increased by 25.2% from 2020 to 2021, and the proportion of QANA (18.5%) was the highest it has been since 2015.
- 36 programs accepted all qualified applications, 2 fewer than in 2020.

The 49 programs that did not accept all qualified applications were asked to rank the reasons why qualified applications were not offered admission in order of importance.

- Lack of clinical space was ranked as the first or second most important reason for not offering admission to all qualified applications by 34 programs (69.4% of 49 responding programs).
  - Programs that ranked lack of clinical space first or second cited reasons such as preference given to professional nursing students (10 programs) and COVID-19 related restrictions

**Table 1. Qualified Applications, Admissions, and Qualified Applications Not Offered Admission (QANA), 2011-2021**

Year	Seats for New Students <sup>3,4,6</sup>	Qualified Applications	Offered Admission	QANA (%)
2011	9,776	15,648	9,480	6,168 (39.4%)
2012	8,989	13,839	8,929	4,910 (35.5%)
2013	8,947	11,061	8,114	2,947 (26.6%)
2014	8,743	10,529	8,238	2,291 (21.8%)
2015	8,719	9,305	7,698	1,607 (17.3%)
2016	7,770	7,964	6,956	1,008 (12.7%)
2017	8,220	8,843	7,693	1,150 (13.0%)
2018	7,483	8,433	7,174	1,259 (14.9%)
2019	7,165	8,240	6,819	1,421 (11.4%)
2020	7,438	8,098	6,881	1,217 (15.0%)
2021	6,763	8,237	6,713	1,524 (18.5%)

(20 programs).

- Limited classroom space was ranked first or second in importance for not offering admission to all qualified applications by 22 programs (44.9%).
- Lack of qualified faculty applicants was ranked first or second by 8 programs (16.3%) and lack of budgeted faculty positions was ranked first or second by 15 programs (30.6%).
  - Specific problems cited related to lack of qualified faculty applicants included non-competitive salary (5 programs).



- Other reasons programs cited for not offering qualified applications admission included limitations due to COVID-19 (10 programs).

<sup>2</sup>Qualified applications refer to applications submitted, not individual applicants, since candidates for admission may apply to more than one nursing program.

<sup>3</sup>In previous reports seats for new students was reported as enrollment capacity.

<sup>4</sup>Per the survey operational definition, seats for new students refers to the maximum number of seats for new students that a program can enroll in any given admission period. Seats for new students may be limited by Board of Nursing rules or logistical concerns (faculty size, classroom space, etc.).

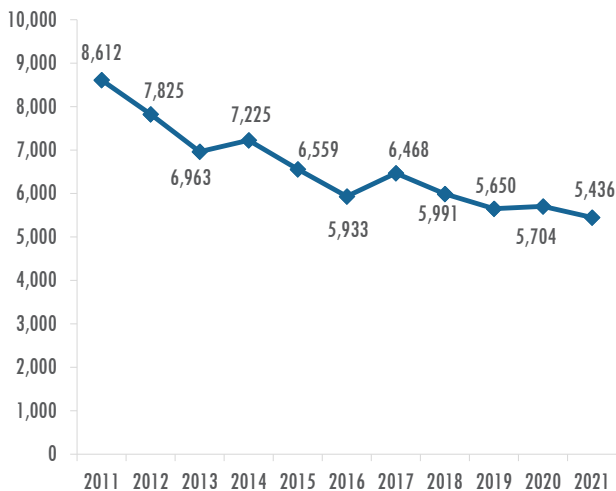
<sup>5</sup>Candidates for admission may apply and be accepted by more than one nursing program; therefore, these data may represent some duplicated counts of individuals.

## Newly Enrolled Students in Vocational Nursing Programs

Figure 1 and Table 2 show the yearly change in the number of newly enrolled students from 2011 to 2021. Newly enrolled students are those who were offered admission and decided to register and enroll in the program.

- From 2020 to 2021, the number of newly enrolled students decreased by 4.7%, from 5,704 to 5,436.

Figure 1. Newly Enrolled Students, 2011-2021



- 19.6% of seats for new students were unoccupied. 18.5% of applicants were turned away, and programs did not fill all available seats.
- Since 2011, there was an overall decrease of 36.9% in the number of newly enrolled VN students.

Table 2. Change in Newly Enrolled Students, 2011-2021

Year	Newly Enrolled Students	% Annual Enrollment Change
2011	8,612	-
2012	7,825	-9.1%
2013	6,963	-11.0%
2014	7,225	3.8%
2015	6,559	-9.2%
2016	5,933	-9.5%
2017	6,468	9.0%
2018	5,991	-7.4%
2019	5,650	-5.7%
2020	5,704	1.0%
2021	5,436	-4.7%

## Total Enrollment in Vocational Nursing Programs

Table 3 presents the breakdown of total enrollment by program type and setting for AY 2020-2021.

- 98.5% of enrolled students were in generic programs. There were 119 students enrolled in MEEPs<sup>7</sup> during AY 2020-2021.
- 58.7% of all enrolled students were enrolled in community, state, or technical colleges.
- 41.0% of students were enrolled in career colleges and schools or other institutions, even though these represented only 18.8% of VN programs.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Multiple Entry-Exit Program is an approved exit option which is a part of a professional nursing education program designed for students to complete course work and apply to take the NCLEX-PN® examination after they have successfully met all requirements needed for the examination.

<sup>8</sup>The military-based program was not included in this analysis.

Table 3. VN Program Enrollment by Program Type, AY 2020-2021

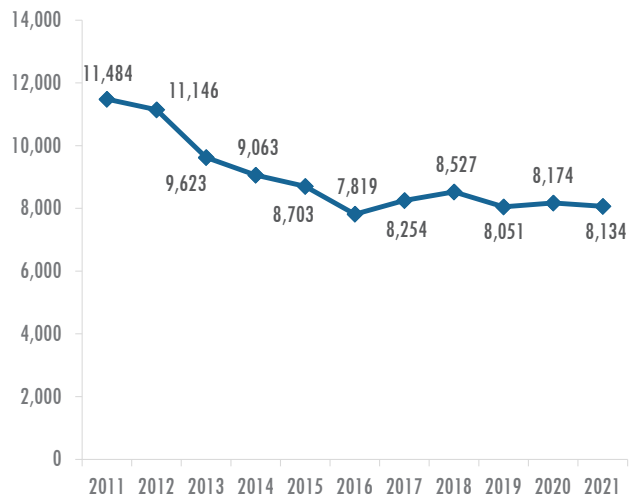
Program Type	Program Setting	Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment
Generic	Community, State, or Technical College	4,651	57.2%
	Independent College or University	33	0.4%
	Career Colleges and Schools and other institutions	3,331	41.0%
MEEP	Community, State, or Technical College	119	1.5%
Total	All Settings	8,134	100.0%



Figure 2 shows the trend in total VN enrollment since 2011.

- Total VN student enrollment decreased by 0.5% since 2020.
- The total number of students enrolled in VN programs decreased by 29.2% between 2011 and 2021.

Figure 2. Total VN Enrollment, 2011-2021



## Graduates from Vocational Nursing Programs

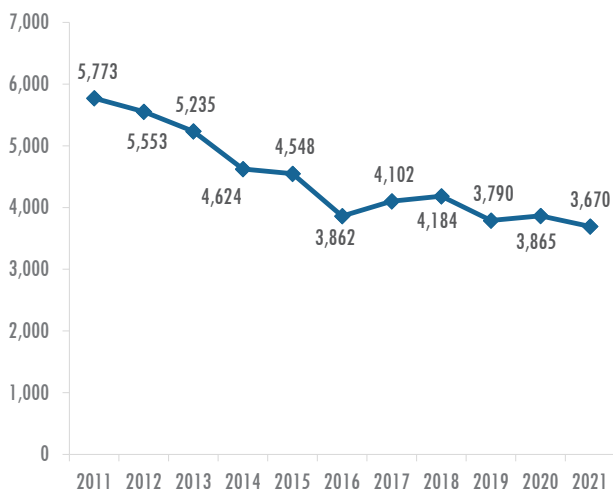
Figure 3 and Table 4 show the change in the number of VN graduates since 2010.

- A total of 3,670 students graduated in 2021, a decrease of 5.9% from 2020.
- The total number of VN graduates decreased by 36.4% between 2011 and 2021.

Table 4. Change in VN Graduates, 2011-2021

Year	Graduates	% Annual Change in Graduates
2011	5,773	14.4%
2012	5,553	-3.8%
2013	5,235	-5.7%
2014	4,624	-11.7%
2015	4,548	-1.6%
2016	3,862	-15.1%
2017	4,102	6.2%
2018	4,184	2.0%
2019	3,790	-9.4%
2020	3,865	2.0%
2021	3,670	-5.0%

Figure 3. VN Graduates, 2010-2020



VN graduates by program and institution type are shown in Table 5.

- 96.9% of students graduated from generic programs. 113 students (3.1%) graduated from MEEPs.
- 62.8% of total graduates were from community, state, or technical colleges.
- Career colleges and schools and other institutions graduated the second largest proportion (36.9%) of VN students during the reporting period.
- Independent college or university graduates comprised 0.3% of the total number of graduates.

### Barriers to Increasing Graduates

Programs were asked to list barriers that they faced in increasing VN graduates in AY 2020-2021. 65 programs identified having barriers to increasing the number of graduates.<sup>9</sup> Some of these barriers included:

- COVID-19 pandemic (39 programs)
- Lack of clinical sites (22 programs)
- Shortage of faculty (6 programs)

### Level of Difficulty for Graduates to Find a Job in Nursing

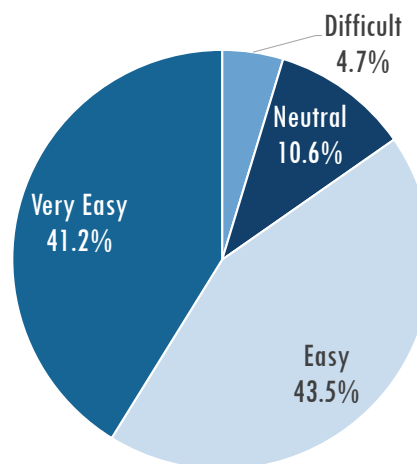
Figure 4 shows the difficulty programs perceived with respect to their graduates finding a job in nursing.

- Most VN programs perceived that it was easy or very easy for their graduates to find jobs (84.7%).
- 4.7% perceived that it was difficult for their graduates to find jobs. No programs selected that it was very difficult for their graduates to find jobs.
- Programs whose graduates had difficulty finding jobs listed reasons such as employers preferring experienced nurses or registered nurses (3 programs) and limited opportunities for VNs in acute care or hospital settings (1 program).

**Table 5. VN Graduates by Program Type, 2021**

Program Type	Program Setting	Graduates	% of Total Graduates
Generic	Community, State, or Technical College	2,192	59.7%
	Independent College or University	10	0.3%
	Career Colleges and Schools and other institutions	1,355	36.9%
MEEP	Community, State, or Technical College	113	3.1%
Total		3,694	100.0%

**Figure 4. Difficulty for Graduates to Find a Job in Nursing**



<sup>9</sup>Programs could list more than one barrier to increasing the number of graduates.



## Military-Based Vocational Nursing Program

Table 6 lists data on qualified applications<sup>10</sup> and admissions to the military-based VN program from 2011 to 2021.

- There were 662 qualified applications in 2021, an increase of 44.5% from 2020.
- All qualified applications were offered admission in 2021.

### Newly Enrolled Students, Total Enrollment, and Graduates

Table 7 reports the total number of newly enrolled students, total enrollment, and graduates for the military-based VN program from 2011 to 2021.

- There were 662 newly enrolled students, which was also the number of total enrolled students for the military-based VN program.
- In 2021, there were 372 graduates. This represented a 2.2% increase in graduates from 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Qualified applications refer to applications submitted, not individual applicants, since candidates for admission may apply to more than one nursing program.

**Table 6. Qualified Applications, Admissions, and QANA for Military-Based Program, 2011-2021**

Year	Seats for New Students <sup>4,5</sup>	Qualified Applications	Offered Admission	QANA (%)
2011	375	307	307	0 (0%)
2012	465	307	307	0 (0%)
2013	465	193	193	0 (0%)
2014	600	391	391	0 (0%)
2015	610	457	457	0 (0%)
2016	561	560	560	0 (0%)
2017	631	566	566	0 (0%)
2018	620	558	558	0 (0%)
2019	640	590	590	0 (0%)
2020	650	458	458	0 (0%)
2021	707	662	662	0 (0%)

Note: Data were not available for cells with dashes (-).

**Table 7. Newly Enrolled Students, Total Enrollment, and Graduates for Military-Based Program, 2011-2021**

Year	Newly Enrolled Students	Total Enrollment	Graduates
2011	307	601	422
2012	307	983	423
2013	191	338	277
2014	391	391	332
2015	457	457	352
2016	560	560	469
2017	566	566	375
2018	558	558	355
2019	590	590	333
2020	458	458	364
2021	662	662	372