

ADMISSIONS, ENROLLMENT, AND GRADUATION TRENDS IN VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAMS

This update presents data for the 83 vocational nursing (VN) programs and the military-based VN program¹ in Texas during the 2025 reporting year, including:

- 78 generic programs
- 5 Multiple Entry/Exit Programs (MEEPs)

The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) collected data using the 2025 Board of Nursing's (BON) Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) that was available online as of October 1, 2024. The reporting period was academic year (AY) 2024-2025 (September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025) unless otherwise noted. TCNWS collaborated with the BON in the design and dissemination of the survey.

¹Data collected from the military-based VN program were analyzed separately and can be found on page 7. Data on VN programs that offer options for high school students were analyzed separately and can be found in Vocational Nursing Education for High School Students (<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-center-nursing-workforce-studies/nursing-education-reports>).

Vocational Nursing Program Admissions

Table 1 lists data on qualified applications² and admissions to VN programs from 2016 to 2025.

Table 1. Qualified Applications, Admissions, and Qualified Applications Not Offered Admission (QANA), 2016-2025

Year	Seats for New Students ^{3,4}	Qualified Applications	Offered Admission	QANA (%)
2016 (n=88)	7,770	7,964	6,956	1,008 (12.7%)
2017 (n=90)	8,220	8,843	7,693	1,150 (13.0%)
2018 (n=89)	7,483	8,433	7,174	1,259 (14.9%)
2019 (n=85)	7,165	8,240	6,819	1,421 (11.4%)
2020 (n=86)	7,438	8,098	6,881	1,217 (15.0%)
2021 (n=85)	6,763	8,237	6,713	1,524 (18.5%)
2022 (n=87)	6,096	7,806	6,312	1,494 (19.1%)
2023 (n=86)	6,424	7,812	6,811	1,001 (12.8%)
2024 (n=84)	7,083	7,222	6,170	1,052 (14.6%)
2025 (n=83)	7,736	9,656	8,459	1,200 (12.4%)

Note: n = number of programs

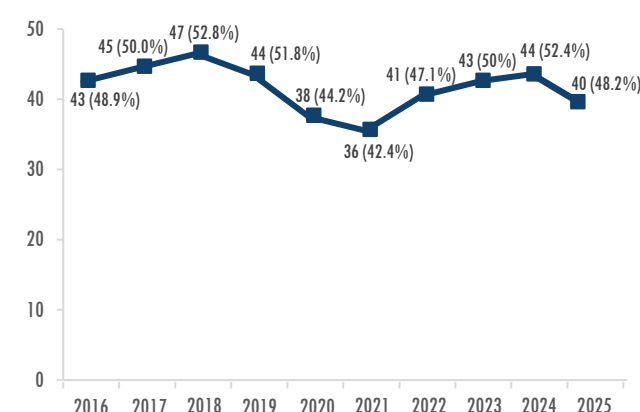
- Seats for new students increased by 653 (9.2%) between 2024 and 2025.^{3,4}
- There were 9,656 qualified applications in 2025, an increase of 2,434 (33.7%) from 2024.⁵
- 24 programs saw a 25% or greater increase in qualified applications from 2024 to 2025.
 - 14 (58.3%) of these programs were in metropolitan non-border counties.

Offered Admission

8,459 qualified applications were offered admission in AY 2024-2025. This was a 37.1% increase from the previous academic year.

Figure 1 shows the number and percentage of programs that offered admission to all applications from 2016 to 2025. In 2025, 40 (48.2%) programs offered admission to all qualified applications. This is a decrease of 9.1% from 2024.

Figure 1. Programs Offering Admission to All Qualified Applications, 2016-2025



Of the 40 programs that offered admission to all applications:

- 24 (60.0%) were in metropolitan non-border counties.
- 32 (80.0%) were community, state, or technical colleges.⁶
- 36 (90.0%) were generic vocational nursing programs.

Qualified Applications Not Offered Admission

The 43 programs that did not accept all qualified applications were asked to rank the importance of reasons why qualified applications were not accepted. Table 2 presents the rank and the mean rank score assigned by programs. A lower rank score indicates a higher level of importance.

Table 2. Rank Score Reasons Programs Did Not Accept Qualified Applications, 2025

Reason Qualified Applications Not Accepted	Rank	Mean Rank Score
Lack of clinical space	1	3.0
Limited classroom space	2	3.6
Lack of budgeted faculty positions	3	3.6
Lack of qualified faculty applicants for budgeted positions	4	3.9
Other	5	3.9
Delays in hiring faculty	6	4.2
High faculty turnover	7	4.7

- Programs that ranked lack of clinical space as the first or second most important reason for not offering admission to all applications cited reasons such as competition between other programs (10 programs), and faculty turnover/lack of faculty or staff in partner facilities (4 programs).
- Programs that ranked ‘other’ reasons as the first or second most important reason for not offering admission to all applications cited reasons such as students chose the ADN program route (4 programs) and students did not meet admission criteria (3 programs).
- Lack of clinical space and limited classroom space were also the highest weighted reasons why qualified applications were not accepted in 2024.
 - Lack of budgeted faculty positions was ranked 5th in 2024, and 3rd in 2025.
- Compared to the RN NEPIS, RN programs cited lack of clinical space and lack of qualified faculty as the top two reasons for not offering admission to all qualified applications.

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

³In previous reports seats for new students was reported as enrollment capacity.

⁴Per 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.).

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

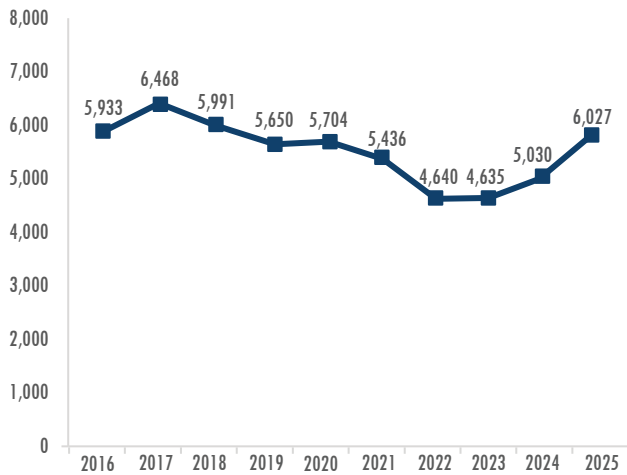
⁶Institution types come from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board <https://apps.highered.texas.gov/index.cfm?page=8303C0B742D6A6217C4E7EB75A775804AD92F671EEA28FA27DEB32DFB4609513>



Newly Enrolled Students in Vocational Nursing Programs

Figure 2 and Table 3 show the yearly change in the number of newly enrolled students from 2016 to 2025. Newly enrolled students are those who were offered admission and decided to register and enroll in the program.

Figure 2. Newly Enrolled Students, 2016-2025



- From 2024 to 2025, the number of newly enrolled students increased by 19.8%, from 5,030 to 6,027. This is the largest increase in newly enrolled students within the last 10 years.

Table 3. Change in Newly Enrolled Students, 2016-2025

Year	Newly Enrolled Students	% Annual Enrollment Change
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%
2022	4,640	-14.6%
2023	4,635	-0.1%
2024	5,030	8.5%
2025	6,027	19.8%

Total Enrollment in Vocational Nursing Programs

Table 4 presents the breakdown of total enrollment by program type and institution type for AY 2024-2025.

- 98.8% of enrolled students were in generic programs.
- 1.2% of enrolled students were in MEEPs⁷ during AY 2024-2025.
- 52.7% of all enrolled students were enrolled in community, state, or technical colleges.
- 47.1% of students were enrolled in private/independent institutions for higher education, even though these represented only 16.9% of VN programs.

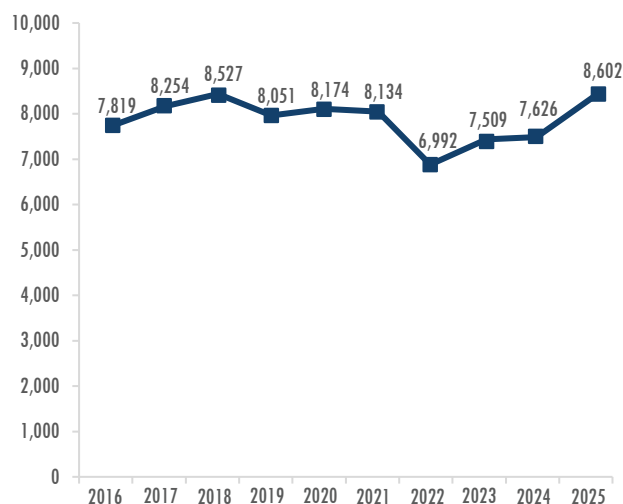
Table 4. VN Program Enrollment by Institution Type, AY 2024-2025

Program Type	Institution Type	Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment
Generic	Community, State, or Technical College	4,453	51.8%
	Private/Independent Institutions for Higher Education	4,050	47.1%
MEEP	Community, State, or Technical College	76	0.9%
	Other institutions authorized by certificate	23	0.3%
Total	All Settings	8,602	100.0%

Figure 3 shows the trend in total VN enrollment since 2016.

- Total VN student enrollment increased by 12.8% since 2024.
- The total number of students enrolled in VN programs increased by 10.0% between 2016 and 2025.

Figure 3. Total VN Enrollment, 2016-2025



⁷Multiple 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.

Graduates from Vocational Nursing Programs

Figure 4 and Table 5 (page 7) show the change in the number of VN graduates since 2016.

- A total of 3,767 students graduated in 2025, an increase of 14.2% from 2024.
- The total number of VN graduates decreased by 2.5% between 2016 and 2025.

Figure 4. VN Graduates, 2016-2025

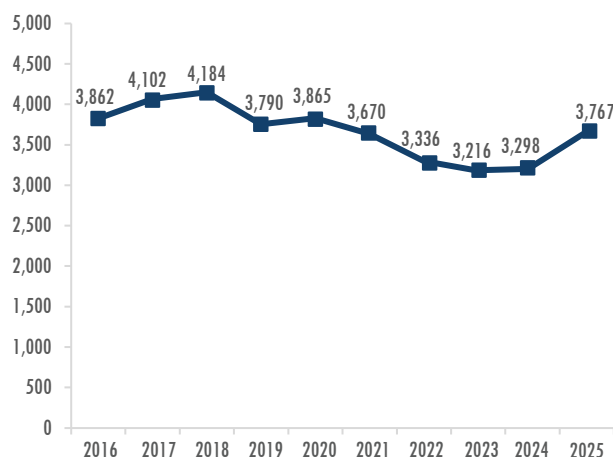


Table 5. Change in VN Graduates, 2016-2025

Year	Graduates	% Annual Change in Graduates
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%
2022	3,336	-9.1%
2023	3,216	-3.6%
2024	3,298	2.5%
2025	3,767	14.2%

VN graduates by program and institution type are shown in Table 6.

- 98.6% of students graduated from generic programs.
- 89 students (1.4%) graduated from MEEPs.
- 65.6% of total graduates were from community, state, or technical colleges.
- Private/independent institutions for higher education graduated 34.0% of VN students during the reporting period.

Table 6. VN Graduates by Institution Type, 2025

Program Type	Institution Type	Graduates	% of Total Graduates
Generic	Community, State, or Technical College	2,399	63.7%
	Private/Independent Institutions for Higher Education	1,279	34.0%
MEEP	Community, State, or Technical College	72	1.9%
	Other institutions authorized by certificate	17	0.5%
Total	All Settings	3,767	100%

Barriers to Increasing Graduates

Programs were asked to select barriers that they faced in increasing VN graduates in AY 2024-2025. 39 programs identified having barriers to increasing the number of graduates.⁸ Barriers included:

- Lack of readiness in student's abilities to be prepared, engaged, and effective in learning (8 programs).
- Lack of qualified applicants (7 programs).
- Lack of faculty (7 programs).
- Students exiting programs due to financial or personal extenuating circumstances (4 programs).

Level of Difficulty for Graduates to Find a Job in Nursing

Programs were asked to rank the perceived difficulty their graduates had with respect to finding a job in nursing.

- Most VN programs perceived that it was easy or very easy for their graduates to find jobs (91.6%).
- 7 programs perceived that it was neither difficult, nor easy for their graduates to find jobs.

Programs were asked to select reasons why graduates had difficulty finding jobs:

- 11 programs selected that graduates want to work specific hours or in a specific setting.
- 4 programs selected that employers want applicants with more experience.
- 4 programs selected a lack of open positions in the area.

⁸Programs could select more than one barrier to increasing the number of graduates.

Military-Based Vocational Nursing Program

Qualified Applications and Admissions

Table 7 lists data on qualified applications⁹ and admissions to the military-based VN program from 2016 to 2025.

- There were 497 qualified applications in 2025, a decrease of 12.7% from 2024.
- All qualified applications were offered admission in 2025.

Newly Enrolled Students, Total Enrollment, and Graduates

Table 8 reports the total number of newly enrolled students, total enrollment, and graduates for the military-based VN program from 2016 to 2025.

- There were 497 newly enrolled students, which was also the number of total enrolled students for the military-based VN program.
- In 2025, there were 222 graduates. This represented a 17.1% increase in graduates from 2024.

Table 7. Qualified Applications, Admissions, and QANA for Military-Based Program, 2016-2025

Year	Seats for New Students ^{3,4}	Qualified Applications	Offered Admission	QANA (%)
2016 (n=1)	561	560	560	0 (0%)
2017 (n=1)	631	566	566	0 (0%)
2018 (n=1)	620	558	558	0 (0%)
2019 (n=1)	640	590	590	0 (0%)
2020 (n=1)	650	458	458	0 (0%)
2021 (n=1)	707	662	662	0 (0%)
2022 (n=1)	668	259	259	0 (0%)
2023 (n=1)	700	397	397	0 (0%)
2024 (n=1)	700	569	569	0 (0%)
2025 (n=1)	700	497	497	0 (0%)

Note: n = number of programs

Table 8. Newly Enrolled Students, Total Enrollment, and Graduates for Military-Based Program, 2016-2025

Year	Newly Enrolled Students	Total Enrollment	Graduates
2016	560	560	469
2017	566	566	375
2018	558	558	355
2019	590	590	333
2020	458	458	364
2021	662	662	372
2022	259	259	402
2023	397	397	256
2024	569	569	184
2025	497	497	222

³Per 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.).

⁴Candidates for admission may apply and be accepted by more than one nursing program; therefore, these data may represent some duplicated counts of individuals.

⁹Qualified applications refer to applications submitted, not individual applicants, since candidates for admission may apply to more than one nursing program