



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

This update presents data for the 86 vocational nursing (VN) programs and the military-based VN program<sup>1</sup> in Texas during the 2023 reporting year, including:

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

The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) collected data using the 2023 Board of Nursing’s (BON) Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) that was available online as of October 2, 2023. The reporting period was academic year (AY) 2022-2023 (September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2023) 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 6. 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 Programs Admissions**

Table 1 lists data on qualified applications<sup>2</sup> and admissions to VN programs from 2014 through 2023.

**Table 1. Qualified Applications, Admissions, and Qualified Applications Not Offered Admission (QANA), 2014-2023**

Year	Seats for New Students <sup>3,4</sup>	Qualified Applications	Offered Admission	QANA (%)
2014 (n=92)	8,743	10,529	8,238	2,291 (21.8%)
2015 (n=91)	8,719	9,305	7,698	1,607 (17.3%)
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%)

Note: n = number of programs

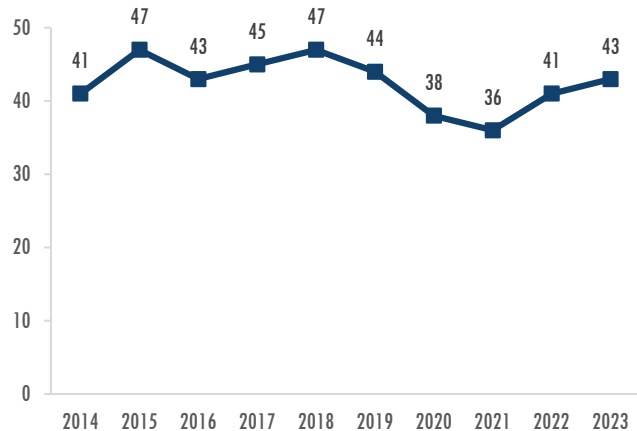
- Seats for new students<sup>3,4</sup> increased by 328 between 2022 and 2023.
- There were 7,812 qualified applications in 2023, only 6 more applications than in 2022.<sup>5</sup>

**Offered Admission**

6,811 qualified applications were offered admission in AY 2022-2023. This was a 7.9% increase from the previous academic year.

Figure 1 shows the number of programs that offered admission to all applicants from 2014 to 2023. In 2023, 43 programs offered admission to all qualified applicants. This number has been increasing since 2021.

**Figure 1. Programs Offering Admission to All Qualified Applicants, 2014-2023**



Of the 43 programs that offered admission to all applicants:

- 26 (60.5%) were in metropolitan non-border counties.
- 34 (79.1%) were community, state, or technical colleges.
- 40 (93.0%) were generic vocational nursing 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.

## Qualified Applicants 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.

- The highest weighted reason why qualified applicants were not accepted was a lack of clinical space.
  - Programs that ranked lack of clinical space first or second cited reasons such as competition between other programs (7 programs) and preference given to professional nursing students (5 programs).
- The next highest weighted reasons why qualified applicants were not accepted was a lack of qualified faculty applicants and lack of budgeted faculty positions.
  - 7 programs cited salary competition as the reason for lack of qualified applicants.

## Newly Enrolled Students in Vocational Nursing Programs

Figure 2 and Table 2 show the yearly change in the number of newly enrolled students from 2014 to 2023. Newly enrolled students are those who were offered admission and decided to register and enroll in the program.

- From 2022 to 2023, the number of newly enrolled students decreased by 0.1%, from 4,640 to 4,635.
- Since 2014, there was an overall decrease of 35.8% in the number of newly enrolled VN students.

Figure 2. Newly Enrolled Students, 2014-2023

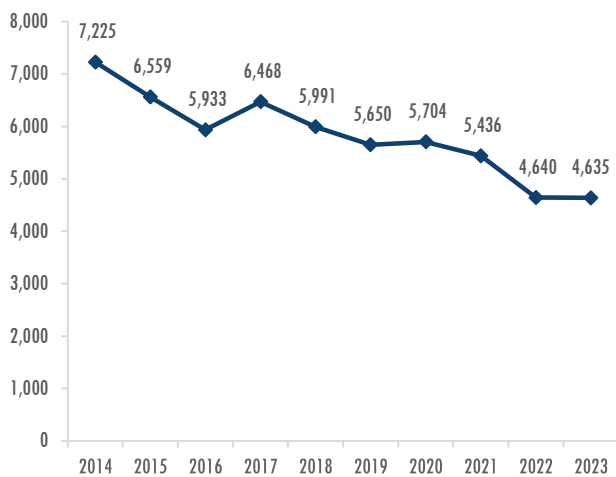


Table 2. Change in Newly Enrolled Students, 2014-2023

Year	Newly Enrolled Students	% Annual Enrollment Change
2014	7,225	-
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%
2022	4,640	-14.6%
2023	4,635	-0.1%



## Seats Unfilled

Table 3 shows the number of seats for new students and the number of newly enrolled students from 2014 to 2023.

- 27.8% of seats for new students remained unfilled in 2023.

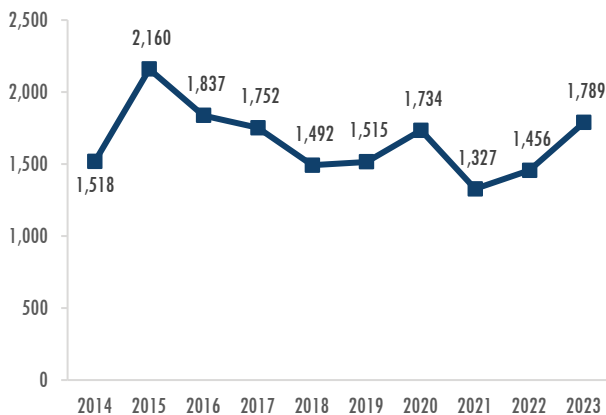
**Table 3. Seats for New Students and Newly Enrolled Students, 2014-2023**

Year	Seats for New Students	Newly Enrolled Vocational Nursing Students	Seats Unfilled (%)
2014	8,743	7,225	17.4%
2015	8,719	6,559	24.8%
2016	7,770	5,993	22.9%
2017	8,220	6,468	21.3%
2018	7,483	5,991	19.9%
2019	7,165	5,650	21.1%
2020	7,438	5,704	23.3%
2021	6,763	5,436	19.6%
2022	6,096	4,640	23.9%
2023	6,424	4,635	27.8%

Figure 3 shows the number of unfilled seats for new students from 2014 to 2023.

- Between 2022 and 2023, the number of unfilled seats for new students has increased by 22.9%.
- The number of unfilled seats for new students has increased by 17.9% from 2014 to 2023.

**Figure 3. Total Unfilled Seats for New Students, 2014-2023**



Of the 86 VN programs, only 12 reported 0 seats unfilled.

- Seats unfilled ranged from 1 to 334.
- The median number of seats unfilled was 10.5.

43 programs reported more than 10.5 seats unfilled. Of these 43 programs:

- 33 (76.7%) reported fewer qualified applicants than seats for new students.
- 9 (20.9%) reported more qualified applicants than seats for new students.
- 1 (2.3%) reported that their number of qualified applicants and seats for new students were the same.

Of the 9 programs that reported more than 10.5 seats unfilled and more qualified applicants than seats for new students:

- 5 (55.6%) programs reported that their number of students offered admission was less than their number of seats for new students.
- 4 (44.4%) programs reported that their number of students offered admission was more than their number of seats for new students.



## Total Enrollment in Vocational Nursing Programs

Table 4 presents the breakdown of total enrollment by program type<sup>6</sup> and setting for AY 2022-2023.

- 98.5% of enrolled students were in generic programs.
- 1.5% of enrolled students were in MEEPs<sup>7</sup> during AY 2022-2023.
- 62.2% of all enrolled students were enrolled in community, state, or technical colleges.
- 37.8% of students were enrolled in private/independent institutions for higher education, even though these represented only 16.3% of VN programs.<sup>8</sup>

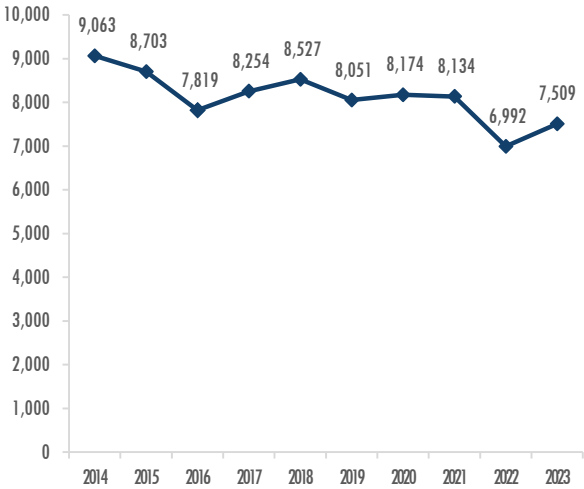
**Table 4. VN Program Enrollment by Program Type<sup>6</sup>, AY 2022-2023**

Program Type	Program Setting	Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment
Generic	Community, State, or Technical College	4,554	60.6%
	Private/Independent Institutions for Higher Education	2,841	37.8%
MEEP	Community, State, or Technical College	114	1.5%
Total	All Settings	7,509	100.0%

Figure 4 shows the trend in total VN enrollment since 2014.

- Total VN student enrollment increased by 7.4% since 2022.
- The total number of students enrolled in VN programs decreased by 17.1% between 2014 and 2023.

**Figure 4. Total VN Enrollment, 2014-2023**



<sup>6</sup>Institution types are classified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in their program inventories list.

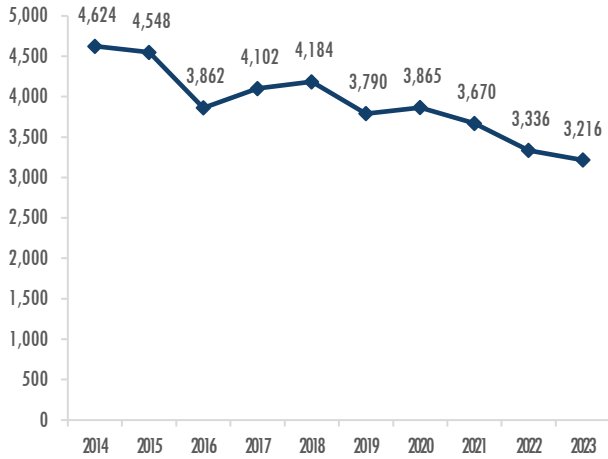
<sup>7</sup>Multiple Entry-Exit Program is an approved exit option which is a part of a professional nursing education program designed for students to complete course work and apply to take the NCLEX-PN® examination after they have successfully met all requirements needed for the examination.

## Graduates from Vocational Nursing Programs

Figure 5 and Table 5 (page 5) show the change in the number of VN graduates since 2014.

- A total of 3,216 students graduated in 2023, a decrease of 3.6% from 2022.
- The total number of VN graduates decreased by 30.4% between 2014 and 2023.

**Figure 5. VN Graduates, 2014-2023**



**Table 5. Change in VN Graduates, 2014-2023**

Year	Graduates	% Annual Change in Graduates
2014	4,624	-
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%
2022	3,336	-9.1%
2023	3,216	-3.6%

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

- 97.1% of students graduated from generic programs.
- 94 students (2.9%) graduated from MEEPs.
- 72.5% of total graduates were from community, state, or technical colleges.
- Private/independent institutions for higher education graduated the second largest proportion (27.5%) of VN students during the reporting period.

**Table 6. VN Graduates by Program Type<sup>6</sup>, 2023**

Program Type	Program Setting	Graduates	% of Total Graduates
Generic	Community, State, or Technical College	2,237	69.6%
	Private/Independent Institutions for Higher Education	885	27.5%
MEEP	Community, State, or Technical College	94	2.9%
Total	All Settings	3,216	100%

## Barriers to Increasing Graduates

Programs were asked to list barriers that they faced in increasing VN graduates in AY 2022-2023. 53 programs identified having barriers to increasing the number of graduates.<sup>8</sup> Some of these barriers included:

- Students exiting programs due to financial or personal extenuating circumstances (17 programs)
- Lack of qualified applicants (12 programs)
- Lack of clinical sites (9 programs)
- Lack of faculty (8 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 (94.2%).
- 5.8% perceived that it was neither difficult, nor easy for their graduates to find jobs. No programs selected that it was difficult or very difficult for their graduates to find jobs, the same as in 2022.
- Programs whose graduates had difficulty finding jobs listed reasons such as graduates wanting to work specific hours or in a specific setting (10 programs) or employers wanting applicants with more experience (6 programs).

<sup>8</sup>Programs could list more than one barrier to increasing the number of graduates.



## Military-Based Vocational Nursing Program

Table 7 lists data on qualified applications<sup>9</sup> and admissions to the military-based VN program from 2014 to 2023.

- There were 397 qualified applications in 2023, an increase of 53.3% from 2022.
- All qualified applications were offered admission in 2023.

### 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 2014 to 2023.

- There were 397 newly enrolled students, which was also the number of total enrolled students for the military-based VN program.
- In 2023, there were 256 graduates. This represented a 36.3% decrease in graduates from 2022.

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

**Table 7. Qualified Applications, Admissions, and QANA for Military-Based Program, 2014-2023**

Year	Seats for New Students <sup>4,5</sup>	Qualified Applications	Offered Admission	QANA (%)
2014 (n=1)	600	391	391	0 (0%)
2015 (n=1)	610	457	457	0 (0%)
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%)

Note: n = number of programs

**Table 8. Newly Enrolled Students, Total Enrollment, and Graduates for Military-Based Program, 2014-2023**

Year	Newly Enrolled Students	Total Enrollment	Graduates
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
2022	259	259	402
2023	397	397	256

