WICHE’s PSEP
Professional Student Exchange Program

Future healthcare professional ...
the West needs you!

Obtaining a professional degree in healthcare can be expensive. Let us help make it more affordable.

WICHE
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) has been providing Western residents with affordable access to the healthcare professions for more than 60 years through its Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP).

If you enroll through WICHE’s PSEP, you pay reduced tuition at out-of-state public and private institutions. Some 15,000 professionals have received their education through PSEP, most in the healthcare professions. They include dentists, physicians (allopathic and osteopathic), physician assistants, physical therapists, occupational therapists, optometrists, pharmacists, podiatrists, and veterinarians.

Here’s how it works

Healthcare workforce needs are at an all-time high, regionally and nationally. State policymakers are looking for the smartest investment of limited tax dollars, and sharing educational resources within the West is a fiscally responsible approach. Given fiscal pressures and other factors, it doesn’t always make sense for a state to create its own program in certain healthcare professions.

Years ago, our Western states formed the Western Regional Education Compact and agreed to share higher education resources in the region through WICHE.

WICHE states that use PSEP have discovered they get an excellent return on investment when they appropriate funds to educate students at other institutions within the WICHE region. Those funds are administered through WICHE’s PSEP and are sent to the enrolling institutions. The student’s home state pays a “support fee” for the student’s seat; this fee is negotiated between WICHE and the cooperating programs.

If your state is a member of WICHE and does not offer a healthcare education program at an in-state public institution, there’s a good chance that your state can help you through WICHE’s PSEP. Your state may also provide support through PSEP in a healthcare field that is only offered at a private institution located within the state.

How do I apply?

- Check the chart at right to determine if your home state supports your healthcare profession. Please note that state support and program participation are subject to change by legislative or administrative action on an annual basis.

- Apply directly to your home state, and become “certified.” This means you’re a bona fide resident of your home state, eligible to compete for WICHE support (which is provided by your home state tax dollars). State residency requirements vary across the West. Visit our Website for your state office’s contact information.

- Complete the certification process before October 15 of the year preceding admission. Most states will not accept late applications; consult with your state for details.

- Apply to the participating schools of your choice. When applying for admission, indicate that you have applied for WICHE certification. You are subject to the application deadlines and academic requirements established by each school. Many programs give preferential consideration to WICHE applicants.

For a current list of cooperating WICHE programs in your field, visit our Website.

- Inform your state office of all schools to which you are seeking admission. Immediately notify your state office when you receive offers of admission and when you accept an offer at a participating school.

- Formally decline offers of admission at schools where you do not intend to enroll. We encourage you to decline offers in a timely manner, as a courtesy to your fellow applicants who are waiting for an offer.

Once you are funded through PSEP:

- Remain enrolled as a full-time student in good academic standing for the duration of the program.

- Maintain your home state residency for the duration of your studies.
Remain in contact with your home state office. Notify your state office immediately of any address, phone, email or enrollment status changes. Many states require that you sign annual contracts to maintain funding, and they need current contact information to reach you.

Frequently asked questions

Q: Can I apply for PSEP support if I am already enrolled?
A: A few states accept applications from students who are already enrolled in a professional program. However, new students always receive first priority. Each state has its own regulations, so check with your home state directly for details. Visit wiche.edu/psep for contact information.

Q: If I am “certified” by my state and accepted by a cooperating program, do I automatically receive financial assistance?
A: No. Each state determines how many new students it can assist each year. If there are more applicants with offers of admission than state funds available to support the students, your state will ask WICHE to conduct a ranking of applicants to determine who is most qualified.

Q: How does a state determine which of the accepted applicants receives assistance?
A: Most states choose the “most qualified among the applicants with offers.” WICHE asks cooperating schools to confidentially rank all accepted students from a given state; that information is compiled by WICHE headquarters’ staff in the form of a weighted ranking. The highest ranked applicants are the first to be offered WICHE support. The process is different for applicants seeking enrollment in veterinary medicine. For complete details, see our Website.

Q: How does the veterinary medicine selection process differ from the other healthcare fields?
A: For all fields except veterinary medicine, WICHE-certified applicants receive their admissions offers before they know whether or not they will be supported through PSEP. In veterinary medicine, however, the opposite is true. Our participating schools adopted a “cooperative admissions procedure,” which identifies the number of certified applicants to receive WICHE support, based on anticipated legislative appropriations. Then the top-ranked candidates receive WICHE-sponsored offers of admission from the cooperating colleges of veterinary medicine. For complete details, see our Website.

Q: How does a state determine which of the accepted applicants receives assistance?
A: To calculate your exact tuition charges with WICHE PSEP support, contact your enrolling institution.
If your healthcare profession is not offered through PSEP, you still have options!

If your healthcare program is not offered through PSEP, we encourage you to learn more about WICHE’s Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP). WRGP currently offers residents of all WICHE states access to more than 100 high-quality healthcare-related degrees (at the master’s and doctoral level) offered by more than 50 public institutions. If you enroll in a cooperating program outside of your home state through WRGP, you pay resident tuition. The programs offered include a wide variety of graduate nursing degrees, public health, mental health and psychology, audiology and speech pathology, biomedical informatics, and more. Visit wiche.edu/wrgp for more information.

For more information

... and a link to your state’s PSEP application, go to wiche.edu/psep and apply directly to your home state office. Remember, to be considered for WICHE support, you must apply by October 15, the year prior to enrollment. Most states do not accept late applications. Applicants in veterinary medicine are encouraged to apply by September 30.

Your home state office is your best information resource. However, for general information you can email us at info-sep@wiche.edu or call us at 303.541.0270.

The amount of tuition you are responsible for varies; please see the possible scenarios listed below:

- If you are enrolled at a public institution and the support fee equals or is greater than the difference between resident and nonresident tuition, you will pay resident tuition.
- If you are enrolled at a public institution and the support fee is less than the difference between resident and nonresident tuition, you will pay the balance of nonresident tuition minus the support fee.
- If you are enrolled in a “self-funded” program at a public institution where there is no difference between resident and nonresident tuition, then you will pay the balance of the full tuition minus the support fee.
- If you are enrolled at a private institution, you will pay the balance of private tuition minus the support fee.

IMPORTANT: The “support fee” funds for each WICHE PSEP student are sent directly to the enrolling institution, not to each student. To find out what the current support fee amounts are, visit our Website.

Q: Am I required to repay the state for my support?

A: Many of our states have a contractual “service payback” obligation, whereby you must return to your home state after graduation and practice your profession for a designated number of years. If you do not return, you must reimburse the support and pay interest penalties, as required by your state. Contact your home state certifying office for details.

Q: Am I eligible to receive WICHE support if I have another scholarship?

A: It depends. If you have a scholarship that covers the full amount of your tuition (a military or National Health Service Corps scholarship, for example), then you are not eligible to receive WICHE PSEP support. If your scholarship covers any balance of tuition that you owe after your WICHE support, or educational expenses, then you can keep your WICHE support in combination with other awards. If you are unsure, contact your home state certifying office or WICHE’s central office to discuss your situation.