The Granite State PARTNERS Guide to Career and Educational Resources

Updated March 2024

The total funding of the Granite State PARTNERS Nursing Expansion Project is $3.75M with 80% funded through a U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training, Nursing Expansion Grant ($3M). Additional support of 20% is provided by non-Governmental resources.

Table of Contents

Introduction Page 3

Crucial questions for nursing Page 6

Going back to school as an adult Page 6

How to afford college Page 10

Improving your odds of nursing school acceptance Page 14

Nursing mentorship Page 16

Special thanks Page 20

Introduction

What is This Guide for?

This guide is intended to provide resources for people considering returning to school. Education is an investment in yourself and your family's future. Making the return to school is a pivotal choice so it's essential to weigh the pros and cons carefully. There are many things to consider, but also a lot of resources out there to help you with your choice. This guide aims to help summarize some of those topics and provide ways to find out more.

About the Granite PARTNERS grant

Elliot Hospital has been awarded the Department of Labor H1-B Nursing Expansion Grant to address the healthcare staffing shortage in the region. Together with 3 employer partners; Catholic Medical Center, Southern NH Health, and Catholic Charities of NH, along with numerous community and state agencies, Elliot will implement the grant under the umbrella of **Granite State PARTNERS** – '**P**eople **A**ligning **R**esources **T**owards **N**ursing **E**xpansion and **R**etention **S**trategies'.

There are three main goals to the Granite State PARTNERS grant.

- To expand and diversify the pipeline of nursing professionals to fill jobs and boost healthcare systems with an emphasis on growth.
- To improve diversity in the healthcare workforce, particularly within the middle-to-high-skilled nursing professions while removing barriers to participants who want to enter this pathway.
- To explore and expand the pool of nursing preceptors with a focus on incorporating a preceptor course in the nursing curriculum.

Participants in the grant program will be eligible to receive various types of funding and support services. These may include:

- Scholarships for tuition for various pathways: LNA, LPN, ASN, RN, BSN, MSN, and other possible roles.
- Support services which may include childcare, travel, certification/licensing fees, tutoring, etc.
- Access to free career advising and coaching services.

Find out more about the Granite PARTNERS Grant!
Visit us on the web by CLICKING HERE

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Is a Health Career Right for You?[1]

You're inspired to care for and help others, but is a health career right for you? Here are a few questions to ask yourself to help you determine if you should enter this promising field.

Are You Excited by the Idea of Lifelong Learning?
The best health care practitioners are committed to giving their patients the best care possible. These health care practitioners prioritize keeping up with the latest developments in the field, continuing to study and learn long after their initial schooling ends. If you have a similar interest in lifelong learning, you might consider entering the health care field.

Are You Comfortable in a Fast-paced Health Care Setting?
In health care decisions are made almost every minute of every day. There is guidance and other people to rely on as you consider options for patient care. Are you comfortable working in a setting that has a lot of moving parts and that changes very quickly? Then health care might be right for you.

Are You Able to Manage Your Compassion?
One questions to consider among many is how you feel about being around sick individuals or facing life-and-death situations on a daily basis? In many health care settings, you'll spend much of your time in the company of sick, disabled, or dying people. Sometimes you might even lose a patient - the sad reality is that it happens in the field. Are you able to move beyond these tragic situations to see the amount of good you do for those who you help? If so, you're exactly the type of person this growing field needs!

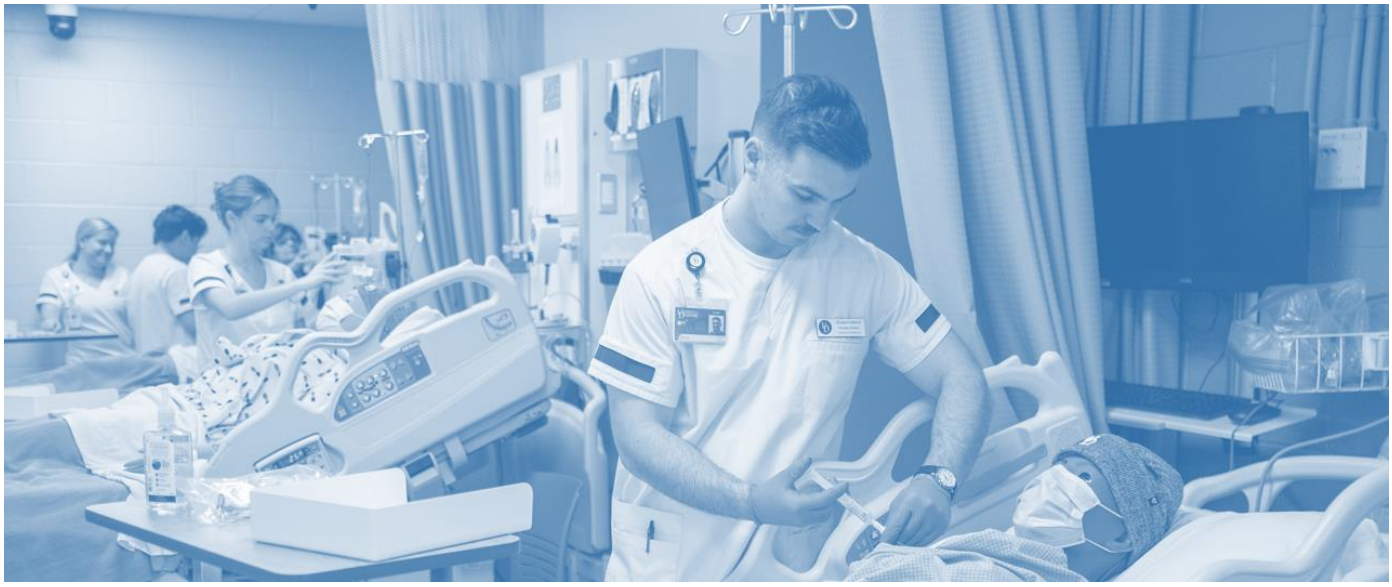
Are You a Team Player?
Health care is increasingly focusing on team work as patients' recovery depends more and more on how well each member of the team performs his or her specific function and how well they communicate and collaborate with one another. When choosing a health care position, you'll want to consider the amount of teamwork it requires to ensure it's a good fit for you and your working style.

If you want a rewarding and challenging career where your work impacts so many others, then a healthcare career – and particularly a nursing career – could be right for you!

[1] https://explorehealthcareers.org/career-explorer/is-a-health-career-right-for-you/

Are you ok with these important parts of being a nurse aide and/or nurse? Some of the tasks you may be providing to patients include:

- Providing wound care; changing bandages; changing wound drains; working with blood; post-surgical incision care
- Giving injections; hanging IVs
- Helping feed patients
- Toileting patients; measuring output of liquids and solids
- Bathing patients; helping with personal care; helping patients (both male and female) get out of bed, walk, dress, etc.
- Educating patients on various subjects related to their health and care
- Being able to work with all ages of patients: Infants, children, teens, adults, elders
- Being able to work with patients who have physical disabilities and cognitive limitations
- Interacting with patients with severe mental illness, dementia, or who might be in altered mind states due to substance misuse
- Comforting patients and family members in difficult times
- Transporting deceased patients
- Interacting with difficult or angry patients or family members
- Handling difficult family dynamics with diplomacy
- Advocating for patients with the care team; being the voice of the patient
- Being physically able to be on your feet, bend, lift, walk, etc.
- Work with patients that have different values or belief systems
- Assist the patient to access benefits (medications, medical equipment, social services etc.)



Crucial Questions for Nursing Roles:

Why is developing the nursing field essential to the American healthcare system?

Across the globe, and certainly in the United States, the nursing shortage is negatively impacting patient care. With less nursing staff, seasoned nurses are experiencing high rates of burnout. In facilities where nurses have higher patient loads, the risk for infection increases as well as possible preventable deaths. Re-admission rates increase significantly for patients with higher nurse to patient ratios. Conversely, in facilities with greater numbers of Baccalaureate level nurses, the mortality rate of patients and failure to rescue rates decrease. Thus, innovative efforts across the US are being made to educate more nurses and grow the educational levels of existing nurses. It is within this framework that the Elliot Hospital applied for and received a Department of Labor grant to develop, grow and mentor the next generation of quality nurses for the region.

Why would someone want to be a nurse? What are the rewards?

Most people entering the medical field do so out of a need to serve others. There are many rewards to a nursing career, both personally and financially. Helping those in need provides substantial feelings of satisfaction in helping improve the lives of patients. Education for nursing has many options including online and hybrid, and is widely available across the US. The time required to enter the nursing field and earn a good wage is relatively short compared to other occupations. Nurses engage in interesting and exciting work. In addition, the benefits nurses receive are great - including healthcare, retirement, professional development, tuition reimbursement and many opportunities for growth. Nurses can earn a great starting wage and advance to high level incomes. What's more, the nursing profession offers many opportunities for leadership development. In sum, nursing can be an extremely rewarding career option.

Going Back to School as an Adult[2]

Various life changes may prompt you to change careers, learn new skills or continue your education. With universities and colleges offering more online and flexible learning opportunities, many people have a range of options for pursuing additional schooling. Understanding how to return to school as an adult learner may help you increase your annual income and experience more job satisfaction. Below are some reasons why adults return to school and some explanations that may improve chances for success.

Reasons for adults going back to school

There are several reasons for adults going back to school, which can include increasing their salaries or finishing a degree they started years prior. When going back to school as an adult learner, you may have more flexible opportunities than you did before when attending classes. For example, depending on your major, you may have the choice to attend courses online or in person. Additionally, there might be more technology you can use to your advantage, such as conferencing applications that allow you to connect with your professors and classmates. You may also return to school to:

[2] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/adult-going-back-to-school

- Earn a degree that can help you move up in your current job or career
- Gain specific training in an area related to your current job responsibilities
- Pursue an entrepreneurial role
- Get the required education or training to shift your career
- Pursue studies that might not have been available while you were originally in school
- Learn something you're passionate about, even if it's unrelated to your career
- Prepare for a new role in an organization
- Differentiate yourself from other professionals who share a similar background to yours
- Fulfill a dream of attending school if you weren't able to earlier in life

How to go back to school as an adult

Going back to school as an adult can increase your earning potential and give you the satisfaction of pursuing your passion. By researching and planning, you can choose the right program and school to advance your career. If you're planning on returning to school as an adult learner, consider the following steps:

1. Identify your reasons for returning

Often, going back to school as an adult requires finding an achievable balance between school, work and your personal life. To ensure you complete your education successfully, it's important to develop a practical plan by keeping your end goals in mind. Detail specific timelines to make sure you're reaching your goals on time. Your decision to go back to school may also come with some advantages and sacrifices. For example, you may look forward to a more lucrative career and better job prospects, but the process may require you to quit your job temporarily or reduce your hours.

Consider every aspect of your decision and create a plan that helps you reach your goals on time. For example, you could create specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) goals to make sure the milestones you set are appropriate and manageable. (How Do You Set SMART Goals? Definition and Examples)

2. Manage your time effectively

You may invest a significant amount of time in your education when going back to school. Consider every aspect of a program before committing because it helps you ensure you have the time, resources and passion to complete it. Make use of time management tools, such as calendars, tracking sheets and automated reminders. Additionally, you may time how long it takes to complete certain tasks to help you develop an efficient schedule. Time management can also help you organize your time, such as completing challenging tasks at the beginning of your day and finishing with easier assignments.

Joining a full-time program may allow you to complete the degree quicker, but going for part-time enrollment can make it easier to continue earning an income while you study. Consider the time commitment and workload before determining which mode of instruction you prefer, such as online or in person, keeping your current personal life responsibilities in mind. (Time Management Skills: Examples and How to Improve Them)

3. Determine the right program for you

There are several program paths you may decide to pursue, such as certifications, associate degrees or bachelor's degrees. Professional certifications qualify you for specific positions in technical, medical and other specialized areas, especially those requiring a license. There may be opportunities to improve your employment prospects by obtaining a certification in a subspecialty within your field. It's important to note that certifications can have more criteria and require more commitment than degree programs, which usually comprise broader education or training on a specific subject.

Associate degrees are more focused on the job and may take about two years to complete, while bachelor degrees have a broader focus and can take about four years. Online classes may allow you to earn a degree while continuing with a full-time job since you aren't required to commute to in-person classes. On-campus programs can require you to attend classes physically but may provide a unique learning environment. Additionally, many schools offer a hybrid program incorporating the benefits of both online and on-campus modes of instruction, which you can ask the school's admissions department about before applying.

4. Research the school

After you choose the type of degree you intend to pursue, research which schools offer programs in your desired field. Then visit each school's website to learn more about the courses they offer. Make sure you're familiar with the admission process before applying. Collect your previous certificates and supporting documents required to apply for admission.

5. Check the required admission criteria

When applying for schools, the admissions department may require you to complete a test, evaluation or assessment to be eligible. Admissions tests may help the school assess your current educational background. Before taking these assessments, you can research the school's testing requirements and preferences to help you prepare. Additionally, schools may require you to pay a non-refundable application fee.

6. Decide when to apply

The right time to go back to school depends on your personal circumstances. Once you have chosen to pursue further your education, find an educational program and school that best serves your purpose. Do your research about the usability and reputation of the program. Check the school's track record of the school and its alumni to gain a better idea of what you might receive for your time and money. While the right time to return can vary, here are a few important factors to consider:

- When classes begin
- How you plan to pay for your education
- How you intend to fit your coursework around work, family and other responsibilities

7. Develop a financial plan

Calculate the total education cost and determine a plan to pay for your tuition fees, textbooks, and other expenses. Depending on the length and type of your continued education, you may benefit from looking for external means to finance it. For example, you might ask your employer to sponsor your education, apply for a bank loan or seek a scholarship. External financial plans can help you come up with a workable payment plan while you pursue your additional education. It's also important to note the interest in student loans you can collect upon graduation. (Resources in NH to help with financing education)

8. Enroll in your classes and get your course material

Once you have secured admission, choose your preferred mode of taking the courses. You may be required to pay additional fees for attending classes in person, such as on-campus parking passes. Whether you attend your classes in person or study on your own, you may need the course material to prepare for exams. You can borrow books from the library and buy some from the school's store or online textbook stores.

9. Utilize education/academic coaches or advisors
    - **What are Coaches[3]:** Need help with your classes? Feeling overwhelmed? Schedule an appointment to meet with an academic coach. Academic coaching is a personalized, one-on-one meeting with a trained academic coach who can help you improve your skills and performance.

[3] https://www.necc.mass.edu/academics/academic-support-services/academic-coaching/

Working with an academic coach can help you study smarter by developing skills in time management, goal setting, and test preparation. Academic coaching will help you become a more effective learner, not simply to survive the crisis of the day. Using current class assignments as a springboard, we will work with you to help you develop the habits that allow you to succeed in current courses and beyond, across all subjects, throughout your academic career, in the workplace and your life.

Services coaches provide include: study skills; note-taking skills; time management; organizational skills; test taking strategies; online learning success strategies; goal setting; soft skills; assignment completion and breaking down assignments; brainstorming for major assignments and projects; connecting to other support services; motivation and encouragement.

- **What are Academic Advisors[4]:** An academic advisor is a type of counselor who works with students, usually at the college level. They are the ones responsible for helping students choose a major and a minor and ensuring that they meet all the requirements to graduate with a degree in that field. Colleges often hire professors to take on these jobs and require that professors continue teaching classes while meeting with students during office hours every semester.

  Services advisors provide include: Advisors must remain up-to-date with the requirements of the programs offered by the school and keep detailed records about each student they counsel. Students will make appointments to speak with their counselors prior to enrolling in classes for the next semester. Advisors must know what classes students still need to take, which classes count towards their majors and minors, and whether the students maintain grades high enough to remain within the program. They may also help students apply for graduate school and enroll in semester-abroad programs.

[4] https://www.topeducationdegrees.org/faq/what-is-an-academic-advisor/

How to Afford College[5]

Affording higher education can be challenging, but there are several strategies you can consider to make it more feasible:

1. Apply for Financial Aid:

Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine your eligibility for federal grants, loans, and work-study programs. Many states and colleges also use the FAFSA to determine eligibility for state and institutional aid.

2. Seek Scholarships:

Explore scholarship opportunities offered by colleges, private organizations, employers, community groups, and professional associations. Scholarships are available based on various criteria such as academic merit, financial need, extracurricular involvement, and demographic factors.

- ✓ ***Ask for available scholarships from the college(s) you are applying to***

3. Work-Study Programs:

Consider participating in federal or campus-based work-study programs, which provide part-time employment opportunities for students with financial need. These programs allow you to earn money to help cover educational expenses while gaining valuable work experience.

4. Grants and Fellowships:

Look for grants and fellowships offered by government agencies, foundations, and nonprofit organizations. These awards typically do not need to be repaid and can provide significant financial support for tuition, fees, and living expenses.

5. Employer Tuition Assistance:

If you are currently employed, check if your employer offers tuition assistance or reimbursement programs as part of your employee benefits. Many employers provide financial assistance for employees pursuing further education related to their job or career development.

6. Consider Community College:

Start your education at a community college, which often offers lower tuition rates compared to four-year institutions. You can complete general education requirements and transfer to a four-year college or university to complete your degree at a reduced cost.

7. Part-Time or Online Study:

Explore flexible learning options such as part-time enrollment, evening classes, online courses, or hybrid programs. These options allow you to balance your studies with work or other commitments while potentially reducing overall costs.

[5] https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/paying-for-college/articles/how-to-pay-for-college-using-these-overlooked-strategies

8. Budget and Save:

Develop a budget to manage your expenses and prioritize saving for educational costs. Cut unnecessary expenses, explore ways to reduce living costs, and consider working part-time or during breaks to save money for tuition and fees.

9. Consider Student Loans Wisely:

If necessary, consider federal student loans as a last resort to finance your education. Compare loan options, understand the terms and conditions, and borrow only what you need to cover educational expenses. Be mindful of repayment obligations and explore options for loan forgiveness or repayment assistance programs.

10. Explore Alternative Funding Sources:

Look for alternative funding sources such as crowdfunding, educational savings accounts (e.g., 529 plans), educational grants from community organizations, or educational benefits for veterans and military personnel.

By combining multiple financial aid sources, being resourceful, and exploring cost-saving measures, you can make higher education more affordable and attainable. Additionally, consider meeting with a financial aid advisor at your prospective college or university to explore all available options and create a personalized financial plan.

Financial Resources for Education in New Hampshire:

Financial assistance from the Granite PARTNERS Grant: This grant will be offering financial assistance to those people seeking to enter the nursing field. As of this writing, available tuition reimbursement is: RNs ($8,229), LPNs ($4,000), LNAs ($1,200). Visit our website for more information on this (page 4).

The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation scholarships!

Did you know that The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation is the largest provider of publicly available scholarships in NH, awarding more than $7 million to more than 1,600 promising students each year? Please see below for types of programs covered, and apply using *ScholarshipSource*, our single, online application.

Scholarships available for:

- Certificate, license or other industry-recognized credential
- Two-year or associate degree program
- Four-year or bachelor's degree program
- Master's, Ph.D. or other advanced degree program

➢ **CLICK HERE for more info on scholarships from NHCF!**

➢ ***ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES:*** *Here are some suggestions of resources outside of the Foundation's scholarship program that you can take advantage of to help finance your post-secondary education.* ***Click here***

Granite Edvance

The mission of Granite Edvance (formerly the NH Higher Ed Assistance Foundation, or NHHEAF) is to support New Hampshire students and families in navigating their education and career pathways.

Search for scholarships with Granite EdVance

NH State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)[6]

The State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP), administered by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, aims to address healthcare workforce shortages in underserved areas by offering loan repayment assistance to eligible healthcare professionals. Participants commit to serving in designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) or underserved communities for a specified period in exchange for loan repayment assistance. The program prioritizes primary care providers, including physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and dentists, who serve populations with limited access to healthcare services. Through SLRP, healthcare professionals can alleviate their educational debt while making a meaningful impact on improving healthcare access and outcomes in rural and underserved regions of New Hampshire. CLICK HERE for more info.

WIOA Adult Worker Program[7]

The WIOA Adult Worker Program is an employment and training assistance program offered by NHES in conjunction with Southern New Hampshire Services for New Hampshire residents ages 18 and older who meet the both the income and eligibility requirements and need assistance attaining or retaining employment.

- What is the WIOA Adult program?

The WIOA Adult program assists workers in obtaining good jobs by providing them with job search assistance and training opportunities. Career services (basic and individualized) under the WIOA Adult program are available to adults who are employed or unemployed, and are unable to obtain employment, or retain employment, that leads to self-sufficiency. Training services may be available to employed or unemployed adults who have met the eligibility criteria under training services, and have been determined to be unable to obtain or retain employment through career services.

- Am I Eligible?

To be eligible, an individual must be 18 years of age or older, a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen, registered with Selective Service (if applicable), and meet the income guidelines to receive services under the Adult Program. Priority of service for WIOA Adult funds to provide individualized career services and training services is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. In addition, veterans receive priority of service in all DOL-funded employment programs.

- How Can the Adult Program Help?

WIOA Employment Counselor Specialist may provide the following services at no cost:

1. **Occupational Skills Training** through a catalogue of over 800 classroom-based trainings that can lead to an industry recognized credential
2. **On-the-Job Training** to create the opportunity to be hired by an employer with hands-on training, allowing the employee to "earn while they learn"
3. **Support Services** for additional assistance such as transportation reimbursement, child care reimbursement, uniforms, tools and other emergency services may be available to help eliminate or lessen barriers that prevent participation in a full-time training program
4. **Vocational Assessments** to help identify skills, interests, abilities and potential barriers to employment
5. **Job-Market Outlook** on the local labor market and in-demand occupations within New Hampshire
6. **Career Path and Employment Plan Development** to help guide that process

[6] https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/health-care/rural-health-primary-care/state-loan-repayment-program-slrp
[7] https://www.nhes.nh.gov/services/job-seekers/WIOAAdultWorkerProgramNewHampshireEmploymentSecurity.htm

7. **Educational Services and Skills Advancement** in areas such as ESOL, HiSet preparation, basic reading, math, and computer literacy
8. **Job Search and Readiness Activities** including development of interviewing skills and resume writing

- How To Apply

To schedule a meeting with a WIOA Employment Counselor, please call your local NH Works office Monday–Friday from 8:00 AM–4:30 PM. WIOA services are available statewide in all 12 NH Works offices. NH Works locations and contact information can be found here: https://www.nhes.nh.gov/locations/index.htm

For assistance regarding the Adult Worker Program, please contact Southern New Hampshire Services (www.snhs.org).

MY Turn, Inc. (https://www.my-turn.org/)

Since 1984 MY TURN has focused on "the forgotten half", the economically, socially and educationally disadvantaged youth in poorer neighborhoods/communities. They work in concert with local partners including schools, employers, and community based organizations in a holistic approach to serving youth. MY TURN provides comprehensive workforce recruitment, education, exploration, preparation placement and 12 month follow-up to ensure youth are successful in achieving their career and education goals. MY TURN is proud to have helped more than 25,000 youth further their education and obtain career-ladder jobs.

MY TURN operates robust academic and employment training programs across New Hampshire and North Central Massachusetts. Each program is unique and designed to meet the needs of the community it serves but all programs are built upon:

- A comprehensive and effective workforce development model that combines classroom learning with hands-on activities and real world experiences;
- A holistic approach to service provision with emphasis on community collaboration to generate the most opportunity for our participants;
- A focus on outcomes that drives all activities from recruitment to follow-up to help our participants achieve their goals while documenting all achievements and challenges.

National Resources for Healthcare Education Assistance:

HRSA Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW)[8]

HRSA's (Health Resources and Services Administration) Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) focuses on improving the health of underserved populations by strengthening the healthcare workforce and bridging skilled healthcare providers with communities in need. Their aims are:

1. ACCESS: Simplifying access to healthcare services for individuals.
2. SUPPLY: Balancing the number of healthcare workers with the demand for care.
3. DISTRIBUTION: Enhancing the equitable distribution of healthcare providers.
4. QUALITY: Elevating the quality of the healthcare workforce and the services they deliver.

[8] https://bhw.hrsa.gov/

They offer various programs including scholarships, loans, and loan repayment initiatives for individuals, as well as grants for organizations such as schools, hospitals, and health departments. Their nursing programs are designed to promote health equity by ensuring that all communities have access to culturally competent and high-quality medical care. Individuals can apply for these scholarship and loan repayment programs:

- National Health Service Corps (NHSC)
- Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program (STAR LRP)
- Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program
- Nurse Corps Scholarship Program

Improving your Odds of Nursing School Acceptance[9]

Thousands of nursing school applicants are rejected each year. Persistence along with the following strategies can raise your chance of acceptance with your next application:

Question: I got rejected from nursing school and feel so defeated. How do I move forward? How do I pick myself back up and make myself a better applicant?

You should know that many applicants are not accepted into nursing programs. Despite a nursing shortage and the need for more nurses, many students are experiencing nursing school rejection. There are fewer spots for students in nursing programs, so applicants are accepted less often. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 80,407 qualified applicants were turned away from nursing schools in 2019 alone.

Take time to get out all your negative emotions with friends and family so you have the energy and focus on taking positive steps forward. Remember, failing to get into the nursing program you wanted isn't final, and it isn't fatal.

And there are steps you can take to improve your application next time!

1. Retake Classes with Poor Grades

If you have science or math classes where you got a C or D, consider retaking the class. Check with the nursing schools where you're applying first to be sure that they'll consider the better grade the second time you take the class. One of the factors schools consider is your GPA. You can improve your overall GPA and your science and math GPA by retaking classes where the grade was lower than a B.

2. Get Experience

One sure way to make your application more competitive is to gain experience in healthcare. Experience demonstrates the student is aware of the challenges and rewards in the field and should not be caught off balance by the work.

[9] https://nursejournal.org/ask-a-nurse/what-are-my-options-rejected-from-nursing-school/#:~:text=You%20can%20raise%20your%20chances,for%20and%20take%20the%20TEAS

3. Consider a LNA/Nursing Assistant Program

An excellent way to get experience is to complete a licensed nursing assistant (LNA) program. This can give you more experience in patient care and confidence when you start your nursing program. After getting rejected, many nurses take a year off to become a LNA and gain experience before reapplying.

Apprenticeships allow you to earn while you learn!

https://apprenticeshipnh.com/medical-assistant-ma-and-licensed-nursing-assistant-lna-elliot-hospital/

You can complete a LNA program in approximately 15 weeks or less, with classroom hours and clinical training included. This gives you a median annual earning potential of $30,830, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. It also gives you the ability to gain experience in various settings as you wait to gain admittance into a nursing program.

4. Complete Your Prerequisite Classes

You may not have been accepted into a nursing program if you haven't finished your prerequisite classes for nursing school. Most programs have general prerequisite classes, but some programs may have specific classes they expect students to complete before acceptance.

Schools usually look for a solid background in biology, physiology, and microbiology. Anatomy, math, statistics, chemistry, and sociology are also typically required. The program you apply to may also have requirements for nutrition and English, or they might require more credits in a specific subject.

- Consider a pre-nursing pathway program:
  Nursing – Nashua Community College (nashuacc.edu)

5. Ask the School What They Value in Their Students

Generally speaking, schools value well-rounded students who have volunteer experience, good test scores, and meet the minimum GPA standards. It is in your best interest to speak with the admissions counselor to determine how highly each of the admission requirements is ranked.

For example, while one program may weigh the GPA heavily in admission criteria, another may prefer students with experience in healthcare or give extra points to letters of reference. You can't meet the criteria for admission until you know what it is.

6. Take the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS)

Most schools want you to have a good grade on the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS). TEAS assesses your math, science, reading, English, and language skills. Nursing programs use this to estimate how well you'll do in the nursing program.

You can choose to take the exam in person or remotely at an institution where the test is proctored. Each section of the test is timed. Students should prepare for at least six weeks to take the exam, which has 170 questions in multiple-choice format.

- Prepare for and take the TEAS: https://www.atitesting.com/teas/free-teas-practice-test

7. Apply to Several Programs

You may have your heart set on a specific nursing program, but you increase your chance of success by applying to several nursing schools and different programs. For example, don't just apply to bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) programs. Include associate degree in nursing (ADN) programs as well. This strategy increases the potential you'll be admitted to a program where you can graduate and be licensed as a registered nurse (RN).

If you are admitted to an ADN program, you can work and attend an RN-to-BSN or RN to master's bridge program, depending on your career goals.

Pay close attention to the application process. Nothing messes up your chances for admission faster than not thoroughly completing the application. For example, if the school requires three letters of reference, send the correct number of letters.

Some programs are also interviewing applicants before offering a place in the program. Prepare well for the interview since it will likely make a difference in their decision.

8. Do Not Give Up

At first, a nursing school rejection can make you feel defeated and crushed, but there is hope. The additional experience and education you can gain before the next round of applications can boost your chances for admission. It also gives you greater confidence and awareness.

After being rejected from a nursing program, some students have found that they were more motivated to achieve their goals and worked harder once admitted. Without a doubt, getting a rejection letter is crushing. All your hopes and dreams for the coming months are suddenly put on hold, and you're facing an uncertain future. But, you can try again.

The healthcare field desperately needs new nurses who are excited to participate in patient care and nursing leadership. It may take a few more months than you had planned to achieve your goal, but it is achievable when you apply yourself to becoming the best applicant possible.

Nursing Mentorship

Having mentors is paramount for nursing students as they navigate the complex and demanding terrain of healthcare education and practice. Mentors provide invaluable guidance and support, drawing from their own experiences to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary for success in the nursing profession. Through mentorship, students gain insights into the realities of nursing practice, including clinical decision-making, patient care strategies, and ethical considerations. This firsthand exposure to the challenges and rewards of nursing helps students bridge the gap between theory and practice, preparing them for the rigors of their future roles as healthcare professionals.

Mentors serve as role models for aspiring nurses, exemplifying professionalism, compassion, and dedication in their interactions with patients, colleagues, and communities. By observing their mentors in action, nursing students learn not only the technical aspects of nursing care but also the importance of empathy, communication, and cultural competence in delivering patient-centered care. Mentors inspire students to embody the values of nursing excellence and instill in them a commitment to lifelong learning and professional development. This mentorship-driven approach cultivates a culture of excellence within the nursing profession, ensuring that future generations of nurses uphold the highest standards of care and ethical conduct.

Mentorship fosters a sense of belonging and camaraderie within the nursing community, providing students with a supportive network of peers and mentors who share their passion for healthcare. Mentors offer

encouragement, advice, and constructive feedback to help students navigate the academic and emotional challenges of nursing school. This mentor-student bond not only enhances the student's learning experience but also promotes resilience and well-being, buffering against burnout and attrition in the nursing workforce. Ultimately, by investing in mentorship programs for nursing students, healthcare institutions can nurture the next generation of compassionate, competent, and confident nurses who will make meaningful contributions to the health and well-being of individuals and communities worldwide.

What are the three types of mentoring?

- Traditional One-on-one Mentoring. A mentee and mentor are matched, either through a program or on their own.
- Distance Mentoring. A mentoring relationship in which the two parties (or group) are in different locations.
- Group Mentoring. A single mentor is matched with a cohort of mentees.

The differences between mentoring and coaching:[10]

Mentoring is often longer-term, with some mentoring relationships lasting 6+ months. In several cases, mentoring can last years or even decades. Some famous mentors and mentees cite lifelong mentoring relationships. No qualifications are required for mentoring, so it is easy for organizations to start mentoring programs quickly.

Coaching is often shorter-term and may be as short as a quick 10- or 15-minute conversation. That said, some coaching relationships can be longer-term too. There is coaching skills training, and many coaching qualifications are available, and almost always necessary and certainly recommended to be a genuinely effective coach. Unlike mentoring, coaching is non-directive. Instead, it is about posing the right questions and providing the space, trust, and confidence for the coached individual. As a result, they learn how to achieve more, reach their objectives and find capabilities within themselves.

The best way to understand how coaching and mentoring relationships are structured is to do a side-by-side comparison:

Topic	Coaching	Mentoring
Timeframe	Relationship is more likely to be *short-term* (up to 6 months or 1 year) with a specific outcome in mind. However, some coaching relationships can last longer, depending on goals achieved.	Relationship tends to be more *long-term*, lasting a year or two, and even longer.
Focus	Coaching is more *performance driven,* designed to improve the professional's on-the-job performance.	Mentoring is more *development driven,* looking not just at the professional's current job function but beyond, taking a more holistic approach to career development.
Structure	Traditionally more *structured,* with regularly scheduled meetings, like weekly, bi-weekly or monthly.	Generally meetings tend to be more *informal,* on an as need basis required by the mentee.
Expertise	Coaches are hired for their *expertise* in a given area, one in which the coachee desires improvement. Examples: Presentation skills,	Within organization mentoring programs, mentors have more *seniority and expertise* in a specific area than mentees. The mentee

[10] https://www.kent.edu/yourtrainingpartner/know-difference-between-coaching-and-mentoring

	leadership, interpersonal communication, sales.	learns from and is inspired by the mentor's experience.
Agenda	The coaching agenda is *co-created by the coach and the coachee* in order to meet the specific needs of the coachee.	The mentoring agenda is *set by the mentee*. The mentor supports that agenda.
Questioning	*Asking thought-provoking questions is a top tool of the coach*, which helps the coachee make important decisions, recognize behavioral changes and take action.	In the mentoring relationship, *the mentee is more likely to ask more questions*, tapping into the mentor's expertise.
Outcome	Outcome from a coaching agreement is *specific and measurable,* showing signs of improvement or positive change in the desired performance area.	Outcome from a mentoring relationship can shift and change over time. There is less interest in specific, measurable results or changed behavior and *more interest in the overall development of the mentee*.

The skills required for mentoring:
While qualifications aren't required for mentoring, there are many skills recommended for someone to be an effective mentor. Here are just some of them:

- A keen interest in helping others is a given, but we hope you'll have that – it's a pivotal place to start when mentoring people.
- First-hand experience, knowledge, and insights in the area you're providing mentoring – because mentoring should be built on solid and concrete advice and guidance.
- Relationship building and interpersonal skills are crucial for mentoring – they're also vital to coaching.
- Dedication to a long term time commitment. If you start a mentoring journey with someone, it's vital to see it through.
- Motivating, encouraging, and inspiring energy throughout all mentoring meetings.
- Helping to identify the mentee's goals is crucial. This can take some self-reflection from the mentor to help the mentee work out where their goals should be.

The skills required for coaching:

- A relationship of equals where the coach and coachee have mutual understanding and respect is critical.
- The ability to maximize resources and inspire is similar to that of mentoring.
- The ability to recognize strengths and challenge the individual being coached to propel them forward.
- The skill to tackle problems head-on and not dwell, or allow the coachee, to dwell on them.
- Ability to raise awareness and responsibility with the individual being coached and throughout an overall office and organizational environmental level.
- The skill to make it real means finding the right balance of interpersonal skills and the practical skills to convert discussions into actions.

Finding a Nursing Mentor

1. <u>Identify Your Goals:</u>

Before seeking out a mentor, take some time to reflect on your career goals and what you hope to gain from the mentoring relationship. Clarifying your objectives will help you find a mentor whose expertise aligns with your aspirations.

2. <u>Utilize Professional Networks:</u>

Reach out to your professors, colleagues, or supervisors in your nursing program or workplace. They may be able to connect you with potential mentors who have relevant experience and knowledge in your areas of interest.

3. Attend Networking Events:

Attend nursing conferences, workshops, or seminars where you can meet experienced nurses and healthcare professionals. Engage in conversations and express your interest in finding a mentor. Networking events provide valuable opportunities to connect with potential mentors and establish professional relationships.

4. Join Professional Organizations:

Consider joining nursing associations or professional organizations related to your specialty area. These organizations often offer mentorship programs or networking opportunities specifically designed to connect nursing students or early-career nurses with experienced mentors.

The New Hampshire Nurses' Association (NHNA) is a not-for-profit membership association and the only state organization that advocates for all nurses regardless of specialty or practice setting. Since its founding in 1906 by six forward-thinking nurses, NHNA has represented the nursing profession in NH through legislation, political action and professional development. NHNA has nurses that can assist you at any point in your journey to answer questions regardless of membership. CLICK HERE for more info.

5. Use Online Platforms:

Explore online platforms and social media networks geared toward nursing professionals, such as LinkedIn or nursing-specific forums and groups. These platforms can be useful for connecting with potential mentors, participating in discussions, and seeking advice from experienced nurses.

6. Reach Out Directly:

Don't hesitate to reach out to nurses whose work you admire or who have expertise in your areas of interest. Send a polite and professional email introducing yourself, explaining why you admire their work, and expressing your interest in establishing a mentoring relationship. Be respectful of their time and be prepared to articulate what you hope to gain from the mentorship.

7. Be Open-Minded:

Keep an open mind when searching for a mentor. Your mentor doesn't necessarily have to be someone who works in the same specialty area or setting as you. Look for someone who possesses qualities you admire, such as leadership skills, clinical expertise, or a commitment to lifelong learning.

Remember that finding the right mentor may take time and effort, so be patient and persistent in your search. Once you've found a potential mentor, focus on building a strong rapport and nurturing the mentoring relationship through regular communication and mutual respect.

Resources for Nursing Mentorship:

https://www.nursingworld.org/resources/individual/benefits-of-mentorship-in-nursing/
https://nursejournal.org/resources/the-importance-of-mentorship-in-nursing/
https://nursing.jnj.com/nursing-mentorship
https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/3-cs-mentorship-building-meaningful-connections/

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Granite State P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. grant partners:

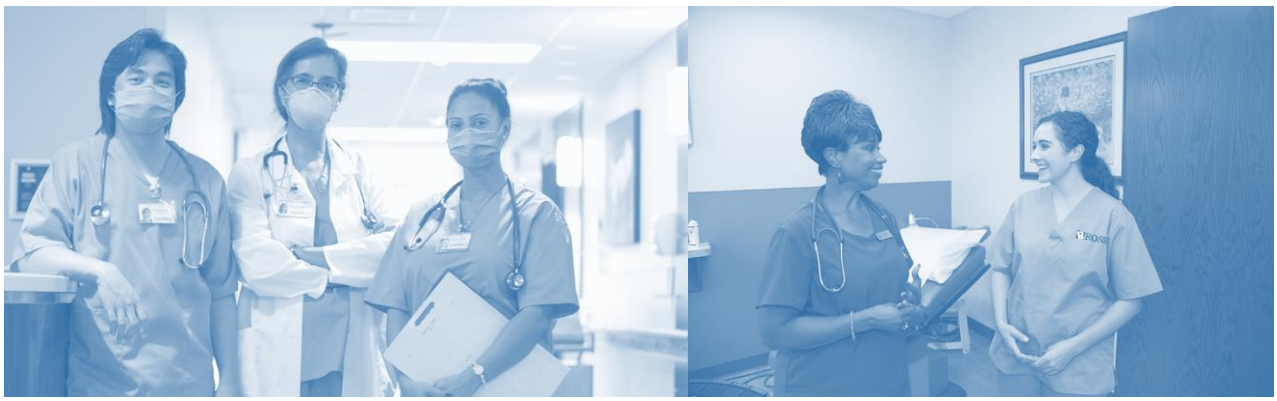
Employer Partners: Elliot Health System; Catholic Medical Center; Southern NH Hospital; Catholic Charities of NH – Healthcare Services/Facilities

Education Partners: Community College System of NH - 7 colleges including Manchester Community College & Nashua Community College

Apprenticeship and Associate Degree Programs: Manchester Community College & Nashua Community College

Bachelor's and Master's Programs: Franklin Pierce University; New England College

Workforce Development Partners: NH Dept. of Business & Economic Affairs Office of Workforce Opportunity; NH Health and Human Services State Workforce Innovation Board; NH Employment Security; Network4Health – a 40-partner network including Waypoint, The Upper Room, Families in Transition, Building Community in NH, Center for Life Management, The Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester; Healthforce NH

Community Partners: International Institute of New England; Southern NH Area Health Education Center (AHEC); Endowment for Health; My Turn

Worker Organization Partner: NH Nurses Association