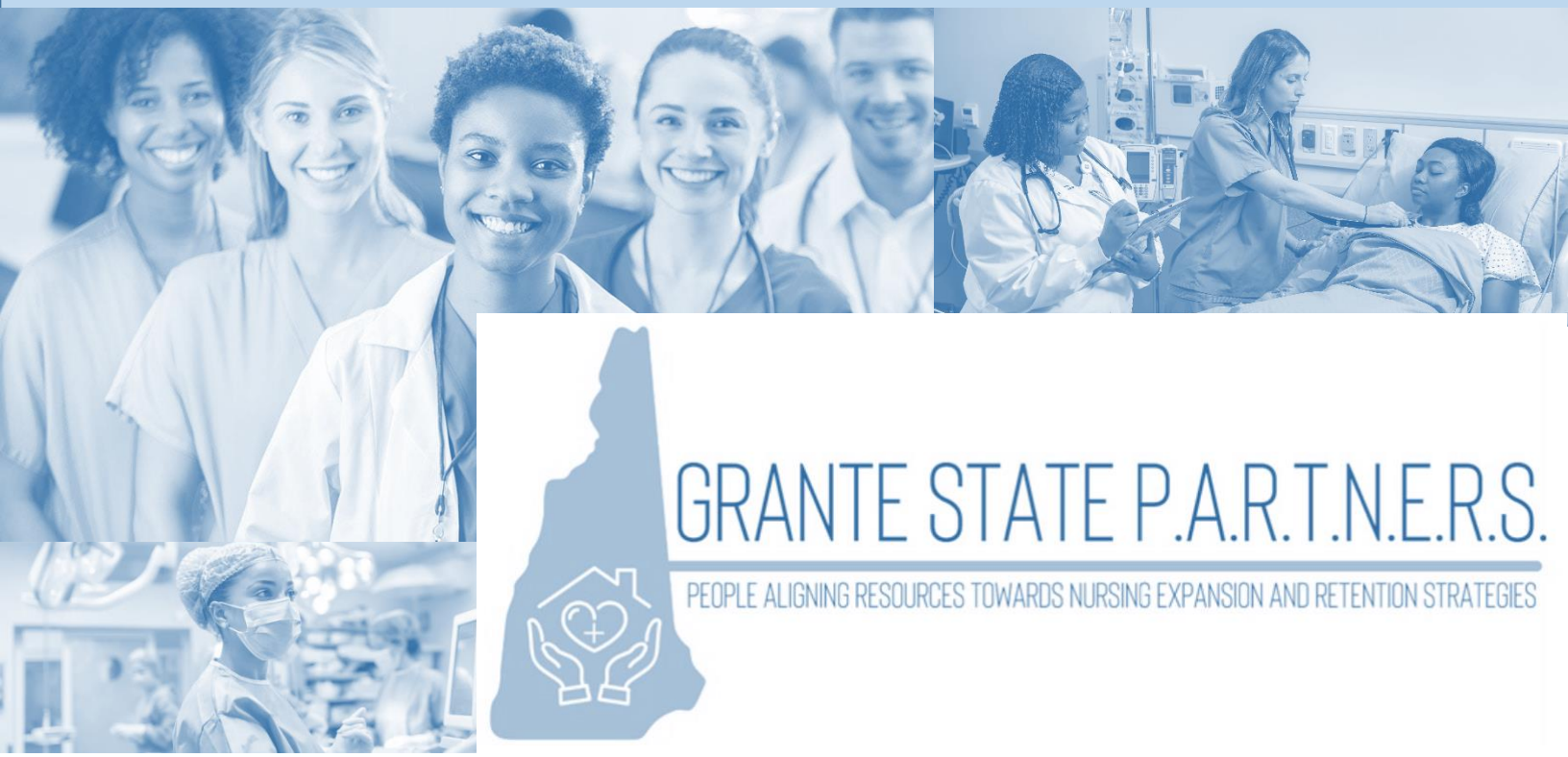
The Granite State PARTNERS Guide to Education and Careers in Nursing



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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.

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Introduction

Who is This Guide for?

This guide is intended to provide scholarship/planning information for those in our community who wish to pursue a career in the nursing field and those agencies that work with career-seekers.

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

Contact:

Sarah Vlasich BSN, RN, CMSRN

Workforce Development Specialist

QR Code:

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.

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!

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

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

- 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.)

What are the different types of nursing jobs?[2]

Nursing Assistant

What would I do?	Where would I work?
Nursing Assistants work under the direction of Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and assist with nursing procedures. As of this printing in New Hampshire, Nursing Assistants are referenced as Licensed Nursing Assistants (LNAs) and governed by the NH Board of Nursing. They provide basic patient care and help with the activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, and walking. Nursing Assistants have a great deal of patient contact and are responsible for monitoring and observing and reporting patients' vital signs, conditions, and changes. They answer patient call lights, assist patients in and out of bed, serve meals and feed patients, and perform light housekeeping duties. Restorative Care is an important duty of the LNA and includes progressive walking, range of motion, teaching transfer techniques and small shifts of weight and self-feeding.	Nursing Assistants work in health care facilities and in-home health care, where they are called Home Health Aides, under the direction of Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses. LNAs may work in hospitals, mental health institutions, nursing homes, physician offices, private homes, and long-term care units of prisons. Nursing Assistants are on their feet most of the time and may be required to lift and move patients.
What do I need to know?	**Where can I find more information?**
A high school diploma is usually required in addition to additional training to obtain their license. The state requires an educational program and a mandatory practical and written examination for licensing. Nursing homes and home care agencies require a federal competency examination. Training to become an LNA, which includes a minimum of 100 hours of	American Nurses Association: www.nursingworld.org Home Care Association of New Hampshire: www.homecarenh.org National Association for Home Care and Hospice: www.nahc.org National Network of Career Nursing Assistants: www.cna-network.org New Hampshire Board of Nursing: www.oplc.nh.gov/nursing

[2] https://www.snhahec.org/uploads/1/3/2/1/132121212/interactive_catalog_5th_edition_final.pdf - Finding Your Career in Health Care Guide, 5th Edition, by the New Hampshire Area Health Education Center - Page 88

classroom and practical instruction, is available in many schools and nursing homes in New Hampshire. Generally a program lasts between 7 – 10 weeks. Sources of funding for these programs are often available which make them low or no cost depending on your individual situation.	New Hampshire Nurses Association: www.nhnurses.org Nursing Assistant Resources on the Web: www.nursingassistants.net; Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute: www.phinational.org

Pay for a Nursing Assistant in NH:

Occupation[3]	Region/City	Low	Average	High
Licensed Nursing Assistant	State	$ 16.78	$ 19.83	$ 21.34
	Concord	$ 17.34	$ 19.75	$ 20.94
	Manchester	$ 16.31	$ 19.44	$ 21.01
	Nashua	$ 17.69	$ 21.70	$ 23.72

Licensed Practical Nurse

What would I do?	Where would I work?
A Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) provides routine care for patients of all ages. An LPN's duties may include giving some injections (depending on the types of medications); taking, recording, and monitoring patients' vital signs; performing diagnostic tests and treatments; changing dressings; and evaluating patients' needs or reactions to treatments or medications. LPNs may start and give intravenous medications after completing an intravenous course.	LPNs are employed in a variety of places including: Hospitals, physician offices, private homes, community health clinics, community mental health centers and hospitals, substance use recovery centers, and nursing homes.

[3] Wage data from: https://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/

What do I need to know?	Where can I find more information?
To begin the career path of an LPN you will need a high school diploma or equivalent. This is one of the basic gateways to enter an accredited LPN program. Licensure examination is known as the National Council Licensure Examination—Practical Nurse (NCLEX-PN); The diploma/certificate will take only 12 months studying and practicing to receive education in both theory and practice.	American Nurses Association: www.nursingworld.org National Association for Practical Nurse Education & Services: www.napnes.org New Hampshire Nurses Association: www.nhnurses.org Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute: www.phinational.org

Pay for a Licensed Practical Nurse in NH:

Occupation	Region/City	Low	Average	High
Licensed Practical Nurse	State	$ 26.57	$ 32.05	$ 34.76
	Concord	$ 25.86	$ 30.90	$ 33.42
	Manchester	$ 27.95	$ 32.94	$ 35.43
	Nashua	$ 27.90	$ 33.98	$ 37.03

Registered Nurse – Associate Degree Level (ASN)

What would I do?	Where would I work?
Registered Nurses (RNs) provide patients with treatment and education for health care issues. Responsibilities of RNs include: observing, assessing, and recording patients' symptoms, reactions, and progress; making nursing diagnoses; and implementing patient education. Depending on their area of specialization, RNs are responsible for administering treatments, performing therapeutic procedures, conducting health screenings, and supervising other nursing staff such as Licensed Practical Nurses or Licensed Nursing Assistants.	Registered Nurses may work in a variety of settings depending on their interests and area of specialization including: hospitals, community health centers, forensics, schools, physician offices, private homes, rehabilitation centers, community mental health centers and hospitals, substance use recovery centers, and nursing homes, nursing homes, industrial or corporate sites, and colleges and universities.

RNs can receive advanced training and graduate education in a nursing specialty area to become a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). RNs can also work in non-direct roles such as administrators, researchers, consultants, and educators. RNs may choose to specialize in one or many areas including: anesthesiology, cardiology, case management, community health, emergency care, end-of-life care, gerontology, intensive care, medical surgical care, neonatology, occupational health, oncology, orthopedics, operating room pediatrics, psychiatry, public health, school health, and many other clinical specialties.	
What do I need to know?	**Where can I find more information?**
Registered Nurses can receive an associate-level education offered by community and liberal arts colleges in programs lasting 18 – 24 months. Associate RNs are accountable for provision of direct care to assigned patients. They contribute to unit activities, support enhancement of the care delivery system at the unit level, and support peers in the delivery of patient care services.	American Association of Colleges of Nursing: www.aacn.nche.edu American Nurses Association: www.nursingworld.org Discover Nursing Online: www.discovernursing.com National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists: www.nacns.org New Hampshire Nurses Association: www.nhnurses.org

Registered Nurse – Bachelor Degree Level (BSN)

What would I do?	**Where would I work?**
Mid-level: Registered Nurses can also receive a bachelor's level education offered by colleges and universities. They are accountable for provision of competent patient care based on established standards and assume an expanded role, which may include charge nurse, preceptor, and committee member responsibilities.	Registered Nurses may work in a variety of settings depending on their interests and area of specialization including: hospitals, community health centers, forensics, schools, physician offices, private homes, rehabilitation centers, community mental health centers and hospitals, substance use recovery centers, and nursing homes, nursing homes, industrial or corporate sites, and colleges and universities.

What do I need to know?	Where can I find more information?
Evidence has shown that nurses with a BSN have better patient outcomes, therefore, most hospitals prefer to hire BSN nurses and some organizations require it. Hospitals that do hire ASN's will often require them to get a BSN within 5 years. Tuition assistance is often given to assist with this. BSN nurses have higher education and more quickly transitioned into a supervisory role.	American Association of Colleges of Nursing: www.aacn.nche.edu American Nurses Association: www.nursingworld.org Discover Nursing Online: www.discovernursing.com National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists: www.nacns.org New Hampshire Nurses Association: www.nhnurses.org

Pay for Registered Nurses in NH:

Occupation	Region/City	Low	Average	High
Registered Nurse	State	$ 32.56	$ 42.08	$ 46.76
	Concord	$ 32.65	$ 40.97	$ 45.13
	Manchester	$ 31.85	$ 41.32	$ 46.04
	Nashua	$ 35.73	$ 45.32	$ 50.10

RN – Master of Science in Nursing (RN MSN)[4] [5]

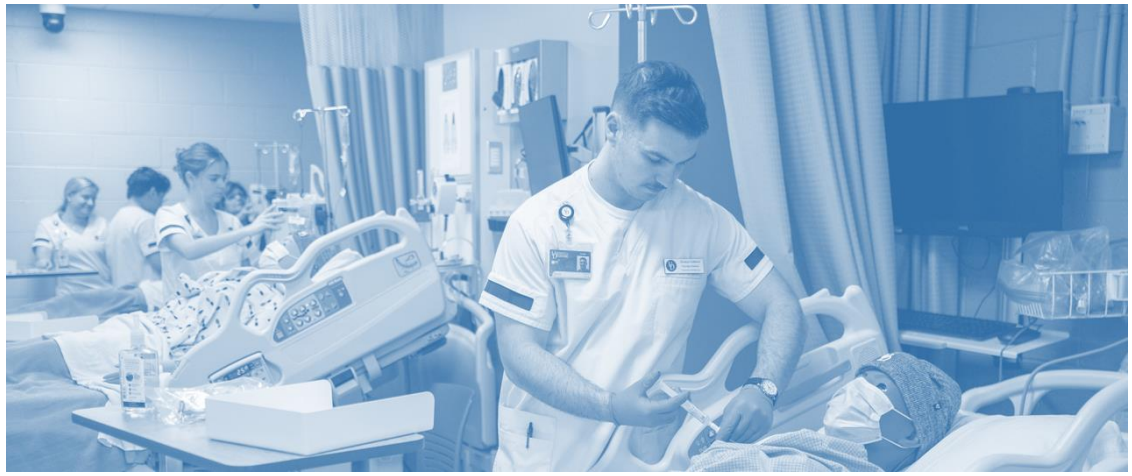
What would I do?	Where would I work?
Many higher-level nursing jobs require more responsibility and, therefore, more education. Earning a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) may lead to more competitive compensation and more autonomy with patients. This type of degree may be ideal for those who wish to take on leadership or management roles or who want to pursue licensure as an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN). By earning their degrees from accredited on-campus or online MSN programs, nursing professionals can open the door to a variety of MSN careers in clinical and administrative roles. Through graduate nursing programs, MSN students are likely to increase their clinical knowledge and develop important skills like close attention to detail, critical thinking, problem-solving and communication.	There are a lot of opportunities and possible careers with an MSN degree. Jobs that require an MSN degree are likely leadership roles or positions that require more advanced patient care. MSN programs provide Registered Nurses (RNs) with opportunities for career advancement in various nursing specializations through advanced training in clinical, administrative, and educational areas of nursing. Eligible RNs can choose from MSN degree programs in Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) specializations like Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), Certified Nurse Educator (CNE), Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM) and MSN programs that prepare students to become Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNLs).
What do I need to know?	**Where can I find more information?**
While MSN program requirements vary by specialization, there is a core MSN curriculum that covers master's-level coursework and training in areas outlined by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) in The Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing. These areas include organization and systems leadership; healthcare informatics; quality improvement and safety; healthcare research; and evidence-based	American Association of Colleges of Nursing: www.aacn.nche.edu American Nurses Association: www.nursingworld.org Discover Nursing Online: www.discovernursing.com National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists: www.nacns.org New Hampshire Nurses Association: www.nhnurses.org

[4] https://nursinglicensemap.com/nursing-degrees/masters-in-nursing/what-can-you-do-with-msn/#:~:text=An%20MSN%20in%20nursing%20education,typically%20in%20a%20research%20role

[5] https://www.onlineeducation.com/nursing/faqs/careers-with-an-msn-degree

practice. The core curriculum also includes clinical training in advanced physiology, pharmacology, and patient assessment. Most accredited MSN programs integrate a certain number of professional training hours in the program's area of specialization. In is not uncommon for MSN programs to require a minimum of 400-500 hours of clinical hours training. There are pathways to earning an MSN degree for RNs with an associate's degree in nursing (ADN) or a hospital based nursing diploma; RNs with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN); and RNs who have bachelor's degree in a field other than nursing. There are also direct-entry MSN programs that accept applicants who are not licensed RNs, but who do hold a bachelor's degree in a non-nursing field. The time to completion for these programs varies by specialization and by pathway, but licensed RNs who have taken all of their BSN requirements and who enroll full-time in an MSN program can graduate in two years. How long it takes to earn an MSN may vary depending on the school and program you choose.	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists: NACNS: https://nacns.org The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM): http://www.midwife.org/ The American Organization for Nursing Leadership: https://www.aonl.org/

Pay for MSNs in NH: *Not available.*[6]



[6] *The USDOL only breaks out master's prepared nursing roles for Nurse Midwives (SOC code: 29-1161), and Nurse Anesthetists (SOC code: 29-1151)*

Nurse Practitioner

What would I do?	Where would I work?
Nurse Practitioners (NPs) have obtained advanced education and training enabling them to provide primary care to patients of all ages. When caring for patients, NPs may collaborate with physicians and other health professionals or practice independently. NPs may specialize in one or more areas. Their responsibilities include performing physical examinations, diagnosing and treating a full range of health problems, ordering and interpreting tests, and prescribing medications. Educating patients about their medical conditions, family planning, disease prevention, and preventive care is another role of a NP. Nurse Practitioners may specialize in one or more of the following areas: adult health, cardiology, family health, geriatrics, neonatology, neurology, oncology, pediatrics, school health, women's health, psychiatric/mental health, emergency/trauma, anesthesia, midwifery, reproductive health, or palliative care.	Nurse Practitioners may work in a variety of environments depending on their interests and specialization including: hospitals, community health centers, forensics, schools, physician offices, private homes, rehabilitation centers, community mental health centers and hospitals, substance use recovery centers, and nursing homes, nursing homes, industrial or corporate sites, and colleges and universities. NPs work in both rural and urban settings and may have their own practices.
What do I need to know?	**Where can I find more information?**
Entry level: Before becoming a Nurse Practitioner you must be licensed as a Registered Nurse. Individuals with a bachelor's degree in a field other than nursing may be eligible to attend a program preparing nurse practitioners without first attending a separate nursing school. Mid-level: All NP programs are graduate level and last from one to three years offering a master's degree upon completion. Advanced level: After an NP has completed his/her graduate education, a post-master's certificate is also possible. (Would this be a specialty?)	American Association of Nurse Practitioners: www.aanp.org American Nurses Association: www.nursingworld.org New Hampshire Nurse Practitioners Association: www.nhnpa.org

Pay for Nurse Practitioners in NH:

Occupation	Region/City	Low	Average	High
Nurse Practitioners	State	$ 49.32	$ 63.45	$ 70.40
	Concord	$ 47.14	$ 61.26	$ 68.33
	Manchester	$ 50.68	$ 63.22	$ 69.49
	Nashua	$ 52.78	$ 68.73	$ 76.71

Key Similarities and Differences between LPNs and RNs[7]

LPNs and RNs meet many of the same fundamental nursing needs. Both types of nurses care for people suffering from illness and injury. They provide medical and functional assistance to help patients recover as quickly and comfortably as possible. LPNs and RNs alike perform work that often proves mentally and physically demanding, serving patients in pain or dying.

However, RNs and LPNs usually work in different settings and hold distinct job duties and responsibility levels. Candidates for each position must fulfill separate educational and licensing requirements that result in different statuses and salaries.

What is an LPN? Licensed practical nurses perform vital work with the direction of RNs, physicians, dentists, or other healthcare professionals. LPNs take direction from RNs to administer medication and treatments. This role also requires gathering patient data, which other licensed healthcare providers later interpret. States regulate what LPNs can do so their roles vary by region and setting. Unlike registered nurses, licensed practical nurses typically do not have state authorization to make health assessments, create nursing care plans, or triage patients. LPNs can start intravenous lines (IVs) in some states. And in other states, LPNs delegate duties to medical assistants. However, in general, LPNs have dependent roles.	**What is an RN?** Compared to LPNs, registered nurses operate relatively independently. States allow RNs to interpret patient information and treat sick or dying patients with the orders of doctors. Their work may include case findings, healthcare promotion and patient teaching, health counseling, triaging patients, rehabilitative care, and/or chronic pain management. Both LPNs and RNs use their specialized judgment to provide direct patient care. To the patient, it may be difficult to discern the differences between the two nurses. However, RNs enjoy relative independence in their nursing practice, and they delegate tasks to LPNs but on a limited scope of care. Registered nurses work fairly independently in their practice without the constant supervision of a healthcare provider. States may provide RNs with nursing diagnostic privileges. That said, they cannot give a medical diagnosis or prescribe medication and treatments.
How to Become an LPN States determine the scope of practice and educational requirements for LPNs. All LPNs must complete a state-approved LPN program that leads to a certificate or diploma. Technical schools and community colleges offer programs that often take one year or less to complete.	**How to Become an RN** As an RN, you can start your nursing career after earning either an ASN or a BSN, which take full-time students 2-4 years. Both degrees prepare you to take the NCLEX-RN exam that leads to licensure. While you can work with an ASN degree, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing recommends that more employers encourage RNs to earn BSN degrees.

[7] https://nursejournal.org/resources/lpn-vs-rn-roles/#:~:text=LPNs%20can%20typically%20insert%20IVs,to%20create%20nursing%20care%20plans.

LPN vs. RN: Which Career Is Right for Me?
Only you can decide which career serves you best: LPN vs. RN. If you want to become a nurse quickly, you may be best suited to become an LPN. The shorter education route also costs less. And if you decide later to become an RN, LPNs can get advanced standing in LPN-to-RN programs.

Both careers also offer the same job security, with jobs projected to grow on pace with most other careers.

Can I go from LPN to RN?
Yes. Nursing schools offer LPN-to-RN programs that fast track students who meet requirements to earn a BSN in two years — or less. Instead of taking four years to get an undergraduate degree, an LPN can use their nursing knowledge to get advanced standing in a nursing bridge program.

Nursing graduates must pass the NCLEX-RN to get licensed as an RN.

Nursing Education Programs in NH

	LNA[8]	LPN	LPN to RN	RN (ASN)	RN to BSN	RN (BSN)	MSN	NP
Colby-Sawyer College						X	X	X
Franklin Pierce					X		X	
Great Bay Community College				X				
Keene State College						X		
Lakes Region Community College				X				
LNA Health Careers	X	X						
Manchester Community College	X	X		X				
Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (FNP)						X		X
Nashua Community College				X				
New England College						X		
New Hampshire Technical Institute — Concord Community College			X	X				
Plymouth State University						X		
River Valley Community College	X	X		X				
Rivier University						X	X	X
Saint Anselm College						X		
Southern NH University						X	X	
St. Joseph School of Nursing				X				
University of New Hampshire						X	X	X
University of New Hampshire — Manchester						X		
White Mountains Community College	X	X		X				

[8] The NH Board of Nursing provides an updated listing of approved Educational Programs for Nursing Assistants on their website: https://www.oplc.nh.gov/nursing/lna-programs.htm

What to know about going to nursing school[9]

Nursing school will be challenging, but you can do it.
Whether you're starting out in a diploma program or pursuing your BSN, prepare to be challenged. There's a lot to learn, but don't let that discourage you. Your instructors and advisors want you to succeed, and they'll be there to support you the whole way.

Staying organized and managing your time wisely will help you be successful. Many students balance full or part-time jobs in addition to earning their nursing degrees. Flexible course schedules and online learning make it easier for students with busy lives to find time for school.

"Never doubt that you can do it, because you can!" says Rashetta Tadesse, who graduated from Herzing University's associate nursing program in 2018. "I worked a 40+ hour job and completed my nursing program. It will not be easy, but as long as you keep moving forward and take it day by day, you will be fine!"

You'll need strong time management and communication skills.
Time management skills are essential to your success in school and become even more important once you start working. Great nurses are organized, show attention to detail and can adapt quickly to new situations.

Strong communication skills are also a must – nurses need to know how to communicate effectively with doctors and nurses and show empathy and understanding when dealing with patients.

"Exceptional nurses are active listeners," says Robin Ihde, BSN-RN, an Injury Prevention and Outreach Coordinator for Froedtert Hospital in Wisconsin. "Nurses understand that everyone has their own set of values and life experiences to draw upon, and they try to see the situation from the patient's perspective so that they can best meet the patient's needs," she says.

Tips for Nursing School: What to Expect and How to Succeed[10]
Welcome to nursing school! You'll be challenged each day when you study nursing, but the result is a job in a rewarding profession. If you're feeling anxious, you're not alone. Most new students worry about how to prepare for nursing school.

Read on for nursing school tips and a primer on how to survive nursing school.

What Is Nursing School Like?
Depending on your professional goals, a nursing school may entail a diploma program or a bachelor's, or even a graduate-level degree. Whatever course you take, your education will be rigorous, but success is achievable if you come in knowing what to expect in nursing school.

Assignments for nursing school may include care plans, case studies, research projects, group presentations, and clinical (and plenty of textbook reading, of course). The nursing curriculum includes:

- Didactic coursework presented online or in-person
- Laboratory skills, including simulations of skills performed in clinical
- Hands-on clinical care at a hospital, nursing home, or other health care facility

[9] https://www.herzing.edu/blog/what-expect-if-you-choose-nursing-your-profession
[10] https://www.nursingworld.org/resources/individual/tips-for-succeeding-in-nursing-school/

Nursing school isn't meant to be a passive experience. Success requires a different learning mindset. The content learned in the classroom will be applied later in the laboratory and clinical settings. Rather than memorizing information, you must ensure that you understand the content. Then you use critical thinking skills to implement these skills when caring for patients and to pass the National Council Licensing Exam (NCLEX).

How to Prepare for Nursing School
Most nursing programs offer an orientation to review the curriculum and expectations. You'll have a different orientation once you begin the program's clinical portion.

The nursing curriculum is firmly grounded in science and math courses. When preparing for nursing school, think about your previous or existing schoolwork in those areas and decide if you'll benefit from additional tutoring. Many nursing schools require a specific grade or grade point average before acceptance. Some nursing programs may also require pre-nursing courses or an entrance exam.

What Classes Do You Take in Nursing School?
In addition to supporting courses, the most common classes taken in nursing school include:

- ✓ Nursing Fundamentals
- ✓ Adult Health
- ✓ Women's Health
- ✓ Nursing Research
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Pharmacology
- ✓ Pediatrics
- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Health Assessment
- ✓ Public Health

9 Tips for How to Be a Better Nursing Student
Determine your learning style. You may identify with one or several of the four primary learning types (visual, aural, read/write, and kinesthetic). For example, one nursing student may learn better by reading textbook content and reviewing lecture notes, whereas another may absorb information by hearing the lecture. To confirm your learning style, complete a Vark questionnaire.

Schedule study time like it's a job. Setting regular study sessions will promote retention of content versus cramming the night before an exam. Remember that memorization isn't the key to success in nursing. Instead, focus on how you'll implement the content in nursing practice. Make it a point to review notes after each lecture while the content is fresh.

Join a study group. A study group can help you understand class content since other students may have more comprehensive notes or an easier way to remember information. Studying with your nursing peers may provide a support system to keep you accountable and stay motivated.

Hire a nursing tutor. If you're struggling in one specific nursing class, consider hiring someone to work with you one-on-one to help you understand the content. Be sure to ask for help. Even once you've completed a class, each nursing course builds upon the other, so the content may come up later or on the NCLEX.

Take breaks. Most people can only look at the same content for so long before they lose focus. Practice self-care and take breaks. Knowing how to get through nursing school is about creating a balance between your studies and your personal life. Develop good self-care habits now to prevent burnout later.

Try different study formats to see what works best for you. Textbook reading and reviewing lecture notes are a foundation, but don't stop there. Make study guides, learn mnemonics, rewrite lecture notes, make flashcards,

and watch informational videos. Once you've created a system, save and organize this information so you can refer to it later when studying for the NCLEX.

Take practice NCLEX tests. NCLEX-style questions require critical thinking. Many nursing exams use these types of questions to help you prepare for the licensing exam. Become familiar with this style of questions and take practice tests to hone your critical thinking skills.

Get to know your nursing instructors. Classes provide time to ask questions, take additional notes on the nursing content, and build relationships with peers and nursing instructors. Take advantage of this access to knowledge and expertise. Ask questions, seek advice on the NCLEX, and learn from others' experiences as nurses. Remember that your nursing professor may also be a resource for future internships and letters of recommendation.

Review the Code of Ethics for Nurses. The NCLEX contains a section on ethical practice for nurses. The Code of Ethics for Nurses was developed by ANA and is available for students to view.

Final Thoughts

Time management is an essential skill for nursing students. A good study habit for nursing students is to set S.M.A.R.T. goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) that help prevent you from becoming overwhelmed. These may include your study time and duration, test score goals, or plans to join a nursing organization.

These tips will help set yourself up for success as you study nursing and pass nursing school. As the largest entity in health care and the most trusted profession, nursing programs aim to prepare nurses to be their very best. Expect to be challenged, but keep in mind the vast rewards nursing school delivers.

What to Expect During Nursing Clinicals[11]

Although nursing clinicals are essential to your nursing curriculum, you might be hesitant to provide hands-on patient care, especially if you're unsure what to expect in clinical nursing rotations. Learn what's involved in the clinical process, how to prepare, and how you're measured.

What Are Clinicals?

The nursing curriculum can vary in length and presentation depending on your school and state requirements. Educational content is generally divided into three presentation methods.

Traditional didactic teaching is presented in classroom or online lectures and provides a fundamental nursing knowledge base. The simulation lab provides a no-risk environment to practice skills in a safe setting before caring for a patient. Nursing clinicals offer opportunities to apply the skills you learn in classroom and laboratory settings. You'll better understand complex patient needs, the disease process, and treatment plans.
Although the time spent in a nursing clinical is unpaid, the knowledge you gain is invaluable. Besides applying your educational foundation in nursing, clinical experience allows you to discover what type of nursing you enjoy most, hone your skills with confidence, and network to build connections with potential future employers.

How Many Clinical Hours Are Needed for Nursing School?

Clinical rotations in nursing allow students to work on practical nursing skills in various health care settings under the supervision of an RN clinical instructor. Clinical rotations can span several semesters or years, depending on the length and structure of the nursing program.

[11] https://www.nursingworld.org/resources/individual/what-to-expect-during-clinicals/

Clinical hours vary from state to state, and each board of nursing determines the required hours and settings. Some states permit simulated hours online or in-person instruction in the lab to count toward the required clinical hours.

What Are Clinical Nursing Rotations?
The clinical nursing experience includes diverse clinical settings and specialties, which can help you narrow down the types of roles to pursue. You may even find you enjoy a specialty you hadn't considered before. Most clinical rotations are several days a week during the semester and can range from four to six hours to an eight-to-twelve-hour shift.

Clinical Rotations for Nursing May Include:

- Long-term care
- Acute care
- Medical surgical clinics
- Pediatrics
- Labor and delivery
- Mental health facilities
- Community settings

How to Prepare for Clinicals
Your school will provide instructions regarding the appropriate attire for your clinical rotation. These guidelines typically include the following:

- Scrubs or school uniforms in the school color
- Comfortable closed-toe shoes
- Name badge from your nursing program
- Additional identification badge specific to the health care facility

Other tips on attire include:

- Wearing compression socks for long shifts
- Ensuring hair is neat and pulled back
- Presenting an overall professional appearance

Most importantly, nursing clinicals require a balance of confidence and curiosity. Don't worry about not having all the answers but be prepared to find out if you don't know.

Nursing Clinical Experience
Your clinical instructor will be on-site to support and monitor you and answer your questions. The number of students assigned to a clinical instructor is typically six to ten. That ratio depends on the school, clinical site, and state regulations.

Your First Day of Clinicals
During your first day of clinicals, you'll receive a tour of the facility and the floor to which you're assigned. You'll be introduced to staff members and shown the location of equipment, supplies, emergency exits, and patient and procedure rooms. Other topics reviewed may include policies and procedures, parking, and directions to areas like the cafeteria or break room.

Clinical Pre-Conference Meetings
This recurring team meeting with your clinical instructor and other students occurs before the start of each shift. Your clinical instructor will usually discuss plans for the day, go over patient assignments, and allow time for questions. They may also review classroom content that connects to the clinical experience.

Hands-on Patient Care
Assignments for clinical shifts may vary depending on where you are in the nursing program, the clinical setting, and the health care facility. You might start by caring for one patient, working with a student buddy, or being assigned to a nurse. Your clinical instructor will check in with you throughout the shift to answer questions and may offer opportunities for you to assist with or view a procedure.

Clinical Post-Conference Meetings
This debriefing with your clinical instructor occurs at the end of each shift. You'll have time to discuss the patients cared for that day, ask questions, and practice critical thinking by analyzing how you handled each situation.

What Do Nursing Students Do in Clinicals?
During nursing clinicals, you'll be responsible for various tasks depending on what stage you're at in the nursing program. You'll also be required to complete a nursing care plan utilizing the nursing process.

Other General Nursing Tasks You May Perform:

- Taking a medical history
- Performing a head-to-toe assessment
- Obtaining vital signs
- Bathing or dressing patients
- Making beds
- Assisting patients to walk or toilet
- Assisting with procedures
- Administering medication

During these tasks, you'll practice communicating with patients and their families.

How Are Students Graded?
Each school has its specific grading system, but all must adhere to the guidelines of the accrediting bodies. Nursing students typically get graded on the following: Attendance; Participation; Preparedness; Homework

By the end of a clinical nursing rotation, you should be able to achieve more autonomy and the confidence to care for multiple patients independently. If you put in your best effort, are engaged, and act as a patient advocate, you can make the most of your clinical nursing rotations.

Compiled by:

Geoff Vercauteren
Director of Workforce Development
Network4Health / Catholic Medical Center

Vanessa Rashid
Network4Health Career Coach/Advisor
Manchester Community College

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