The Granite State PARTNERS Guide to Overcoming Obstacles to Healthcare Education and Employment

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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

What is This Guide for?

This comprehensive guide aims to empower those interested in careers/education in healthcare by providing direction and assistance to those people who may have barriers to attaining education/employment goals. This guide is intended to answer questions and give prospective healthcare workers information needed to make an informed decision about a healthcare career.

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 Me?[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!

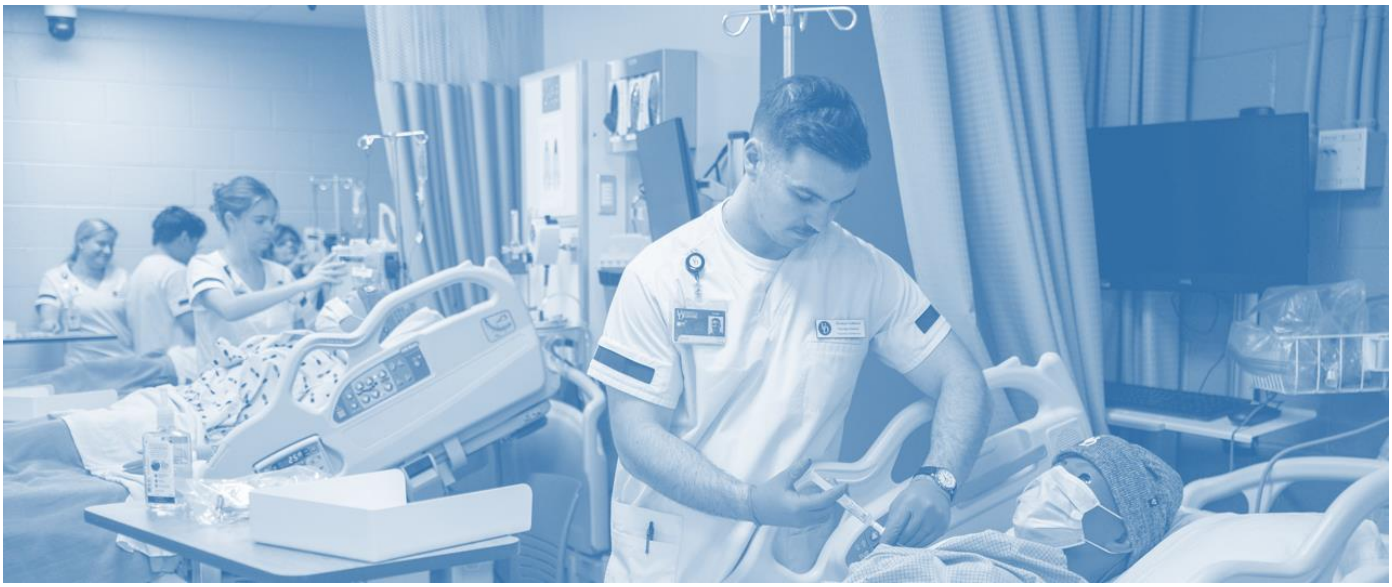
Are You a Team Player?
Health care is increasingly focusing on team work as patients' recovery depends more and more on how well each member of the team performs his or her specific function and how well they communicate and collaborate with one another. When choosing a health care position, you'll want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

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

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
- 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.)



"How do I start building my skills?

WorkReadyNH![2]
WorkReadyNH is a program offered by the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH) designed to help job seekers and individuals already employed improve their skills and readiness for the workplace. It's a tuition-free program aimed at enhancing the skills of job seekers and existing workers in New Hampshire. It provides training in essential skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork, which are valued by employers across various industries.

The program is open to individuals who are unemployed, underemployed, or seeking to advance in their careers. It caters to a wide range of participants, including recent high school graduates, adults reentering the workforce, and incumbent workers looking to improve their skills.

WorkReadyNH consists of a series of workshops covering essential workplace skills. These workshops focus on areas such as communication, customer service, critical thinking, and computer literacy. Participants have the flexibility to choose workshops based on their specific needs and goals.

Program Length and Schedule: WorkReadyNH workshops are typically offered in a condensed format, with each workshop lasting one to two weeks. Participants can select from a range of workshop schedules, including daytime, evening, and weekend options, to accommodate various schedules and commitments. Upon completion of the program, participants receive a nationally recognized certificate, which can enhance their resumes and demonstrate their readiness for the workforce to potential employers.

How to Enroll: Interested individuals can find contact information for program coordinators at various community colleges within the CCSNH system to get started. Visit: https://www.ccsnh.edu/colleges-and-programs/workready-nh-faqs/workready-nh/

Bureau of Adult Education[3]
The New Hampshire Bureau of Adult Education supports services to help people gain academic and English language skills that will help them advance and grow personally and professionally.

The mission of the New Hampshire Bureau of Adult Education is to: Provide a variety of educational opportunities to empower adults to become lifelong learners, to support individuals in identifying and achieving their potential academic and/or career goals, and to assist students to become active participants in their communities.
Adult Education Locations - For Adult Learners
Adult Education and Literacy - Free classes to improve basic skills in reading, writing, math and English language skills (ESL)
Adult Diploma Program - Classes to earn credits to complete adult high school requirements and earn a diploma.
NH High School Equivalency Testing - Preparation and testing support to earn the NH High School Equivalency Certificate.

Foreign credential assessment
New Hampshire Licensure & Registration Info – Nursing https://www.cgfns.org/licensure/new-hampshire/

[2] https://www.ccsnh.edu/colleges-and-programs/workready-nh-faqs/workready-nh/
[3] https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/division-of-learner-support/bureau-of-adult-education

Individual colleges have different transfer credit assessment policies, but in general expect to need to provide sealed official transcripts from any institutions of higher education sent directly to the school applying to, and possibly course descriptions and/or syllabi.

Digital literacy
Take an assessment of your digital literacy! Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment and learning software: https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/

Affordable internet & devices:
ACP federal internet subsidy https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/ (stopped accepting new applications 2/7/24, but Congress currently considering extending funding)
Xfinity Affordable Internet & Laptops: https://www.xfinity.com/learn/internet-service/internet-essentials/apply
NH Digital Equity Initiatives: https://www.nhdigitalequity.org/

Financial literacy / budgeting
Free tax preparation www.NHtaxhelp.org
Free legal aid (civil/domestic), public benefits eligibility and enrollment, tax assistance: https://www.603legalaid.org/

"If I have a disability, what do I need to know about getting assistance with education?"

Having a disability should not be a barrier to returning to school. In fact, it's essential to recognize that education is a fundamental right for everyone, regardless of their abilities. Education is a powerful tool that transcends physical or cognitive limitations. With determination, support, and a commitment to learning, individuals with disabilities can thrive academically and contribute meaningfully to society. Here are some reasons why disabilities shouldn't hinder educational pursuits:

- **Equal Access and Accommodations:**

Educational institutions are legally required to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. These accommodations level the playing field, ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to learn and succeed. Whether it's extended test time, accessible materials, or modified assignments, these adjustments empower students to participate fully.

- **Diverse Perspectives and Contributions:**

Students with disabilities bring unique perspectives to the classroom. Their experiences can enrich discussions, challenge norms, and foster empathy. By embracing diversity, schools create a more inclusive and vibrant learning environment.

- **Career Opportunities and Independence:**

Education opens doors to various career paths. Graduating from school equips individuals with knowledge, skills, and confidence. Regardless of disability, education empowers people to pursue fulfilling careers and lead independent lives.

- **Advocacy and Self-Determination:**

Navigating the educational system teaches valuable life skills. Students with disabilities learn to advocate for themselves, communicate their needs, and seek support. These skills extend beyond the classroom, preparing them for future challenges.

What is the difference between an accommodation and a modification?[4]

The distinction between **accommodations** and **modifications** is essential in education, especially for students with disabilities:

- **Accommodations**: An accommodation alters how a student learns the material**.** It ensures that students can access the same content as their peers. For instance a student with dyslexia might listen to an audio version of a book**,** but it's still the same book that the rest of the class reads. Another student who struggles with focus might be seated near the teacher but still completes regular class assignments. Accommodations maintain the same expectations for learning.
- **Modifications**: A modification, on the other hand, changes what a student is taught or expected to learn**.** When students are significantly behind their peers, they may need modifications. This may include: Assigning shorter or easier reading assignments, or providing different homework compared to the rest of the class

Students receiving modifications are **not expected to learn the same material** as their classmates. In summary, accommodations allow students to access the same content, while modifications adjust what content they engage with in the educational setting.

Disability Services at Colleges[5]:

All colleges are required to offer services (accommodations) to students with disabilities. The specific process and requirements for accessing these services vary from one college to another.

- Post-High School Education Options: After high school, there are various paths for continuing education. These options include financial aid, college, apprenticeships, trade schools, and more. Students with disabilities can explore these options while considering their unique needs and goals.
- Assistive Technology and Self-Advocacy: Beyond accommodations, students can benefit from assistive technology. Developing self-determination and self-advocacy skills is essential for success in postsecondary education. Whether pursuing a 4-year college or a community college, understanding available supports is crucial for students with disabilities.
- Unlike high school, colleges don't operate under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Disability services offices at colleges provide accommodations under federal civil rights laws like Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Registering as a student with disabilities allows you to access these services.
- Self-advocacy is essential—don't wait for the college to seek you out[6].
- Equal Access and Support:
    - The goal of these laws is to ensure equal access for people with disabilities and protect against discrimination.
    - While colleges may not offer the same personalized support as high schools, they do provide accommodations.
    - Seeking help ensures you can fully participate in your college experience and achieve your academic goals[7]

[4] https://www.understood.org/en/articles/the-difference-between-accommodations-and-modifications
[5] https://nextsteps-nh.org/toolkits/education-options-after-high-school/college-disability-services-in-nh-and-border-states/
[6] https://www.edsmart.org/resources/students-with-disabilities-college-guide/
[7] https://www.understood.org/en/articles/7-things-to-know-about-college-disability-services

Asking for help is crucial for success in college, especially for students with disabilities[8]. There's strength in seeking assistance. Admitting that you need help takes courage and humility and no one can achieve their goals alone. Asking for assistance when you're struggling shows strength and determination.

When it comes to accommodating students with disabilities, educational institutions provide various supports to ensure equal access and success. Here are some common accommodations that can make a significant difference:

1. Presentation Accommodations: Alter the way information is presented to students
    - Listen to audio recordings instead of reading text.
    - Access content through audiobooks, movies, videos, or digital media.
    - Work with larger print size or fewer items per page.
    - Utilize a designated reader for test questions.
    - Receive spoken instructions during classes.
2. Response Accommodations: Modify how students complete assignments or tests
    - Provide responses in a form (spoken or written) that suits them.
    - Use a scribe to dictate answers.
    - Record responses on an audio recorder.
    - Utilize tools like spelling dictionaries or digital spellcheckers.
    - Type notes or answers using a word processor.
3. Setting Accommodations: Create an environment conducive to learning
    - Take tests in a quiet room with minimal distractions.
    - Sit where they learn best (e.g., near the teacher).
    - Use special lighting or acoustics if needed.
    - Opt for a small group setting during tests.
    - Employ sensory tools (like an exercise band) for fidgety students.
4. Timing Accommodations: Adjust time-related expectations
    - Allow more time to complete tasks or tests.
    - Process spoken information and directions with extra time.
    - Take frequent breaks as needed.
5. Scheduling Accommodations: Adapt the timing of assignments and assessments:
    - Extend project completion time.
    - Divide tests into several timed sessions or spread them over days.
    - Choose the order of test sections.
    - Schedule tests at a specific time of day.
6. Organization Skills Accommodations: Enhance organizational abilities
    - Set alarms for time management.
    - Highlight texts with a highlighter.
    - Use a planner or organizer for assignment coordination.
    - Receive instruction in study skills.

Remember, accommodations are designed to level the playing field and empower students with disabilities to thrive academically. Each student's needs are unique, so individualized plans are essential for success

[8] https://www.edsmart.org/resources/students-with-disabilities-college-guide/

“If I have a disability, what do I need to know about working in healthcare?”

It's important to have a diverse group of people – including those with disabilities – working in healthcare environments for several reasons.

Firstly, their firsthand experiences navigating healthcare systems can offer valuable insights into improving accessibility and patient care for individuals with disabilities. Secondly, their presence promotes diversity and inclusion, fostering a more representative workforce that reflects the diverse needs of patients. Additionally, having healthcare professionals with disabilities challenges stereotypes and biases, helping to break down barriers and create a more inclusive workplace culture.

People with disabilities bring their unique perspectives and problem-solving skills which contribute to innovation in healthcare delivery, leading to more effective and patient-centered care practices. Ultimately, employing individuals with disabilities in healthcare not only enhances the quality of care but also promotes equity and social justice within the healthcare system.

If you have a disability and are considering working in a healthcare job, there are several factors to be aware of to ensure a positive and supportive work environment:

1. Know Your Rights:

Familiarize yourself with the laws and regulations that protect individuals with disabilities in the workplace, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the United States or similar legislation in your country. These laws prohibit discrimination based on disability and require employers to provide reasonable accommodations to enable individuals with disabilities to perform their job duties.

2. Explore Accommodations:

Identify any accommodations you may need to perform your job effectively. Accommodations could include modifications to your workspace, adaptive equipment, flexible scheduling, or assistance from coworkers. Discuss these accommodations with your employer to ensure they are provided as needed.

3. Choose a Supportive Environment:

Look for healthcare organizations that prioritize diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Research the company culture and policies related to disability inclusion before accepting a job offer.

4. Communication:

Be open and proactive in communicating with your employer or supervisor about your disability, any accommodations you may require, and any concerns or challenges you may face. Clear communication can help ensure that your needs are met and that you can perform your job effectively.

5. Self-Advocacy:

Advocate for yourself and your needs in the workplace. This may involve speaking up about necessary accommodations, addressing any discrimination or barriers you encounter, and seeking support from supervisors or human resources if needed.

6. Access Training and Resources:

Seek out training and resources related to disability inclusion, accessibility, and healthcare best practices. This can help you stay informed about relevant issues and develop strategies for navigating challenges in the workplace.

7. Take Care of Yourself:

Working in healthcare can be demanding, both physically and emotionally. Prioritize self-care and seek support from colleagues, supervisors, or mental health professionals as needed.

8. Network and Seek Mentors:

Connect with other healthcare professionals, including those with disabilities, for support, advice, and mentorship. Building a supportive network can help you navigate challenges and succeed in your career.

By being proactive, advocating for yourself, and seeking out supportive environments, you can pursue a fulfilling career in healthcare while effectively managing your disability.

Talking About Your Disability in the Interview[9][10]

The following is a guide for applicants regarding talking about disability-related job issues in employment interviews.

QUESTION: Why should I bring up my disability in an interview?

ANSWER: One important benefit of job candidates positively raising the subject of their disability in an interview is that the issue of disability is now on the table. This allows the applicants and the employer to begin a mutually constructive dialogue about the applicant's abilities, strengths, and the employer's needs. This process increases the chances of a successful job offer and acceptance.
Job developers and counsellors have found that applicants who positively address the subject of their disability and potential reasonable accommodations with employers are more likely to be successful in their job search.

QUESTION: What is a reasonable accommodation?

ANSWER: Basically, a reasonable accommodation is some change in the job or the interview/evaluation process that takes into consideration your disability-related job challenges and enables you to do the job and or be properly and fairly evaluated.

In the interview examples of these accommodations could be giving more time for someone to complete a test, making sure an application or computer file is accessible for the applicant, or making sure the interviewing facilities are accessible.

On the job, an accommodation could be many things to enable the employee to have the accessible environment or tools to perform the job duties. For example, an accommodation might be changing or modifying the work schedule for someone, providing equipment to enable employees to communicate, or changing the way that work is traditionally performed.

[9] https://www.miltwright.com/resources
[10] https://drcnh.org/know-your-rights/requesting-an-accommodation-the-three-step-process/

QUESTION: How do I know if I need a reasonable accommodation?

ANSWER: To know if you need a reasonable accommodation, you need to consider two things:

One: What are the essential duties of the job I am applying for?
Two: Would an accommodation enhance my ability to interview and satisfactorily perform these functions?

A job counselor or placement professional should be able to tell you what are the essential functions of the job. Essential functions are the duties that are important and fundamental to the job, not ones that are incidental or optional.

If you do not know what the employer considers the essential functions of the job to be, you and your counselor can anticipate based on general knowledge of the job. In this way, you will be better prepared. Keep in mind that each employer may do the job differently and these functions can change from employer to employer, even from department to department with the same employer.

Once you have identified these essential functions, the question becomes, "Can I do the essential functions of the job with or without a reasonable accommodation?"

Working with the placement organization, you should be able to determine if there are any functions that you need accommodation to perform. If you do, at this point, it important to clearly define what accommodation you would need.

An employer may be uncertain as to the type of accommodation needed. Applicants who can suggest what accommodations they need and how these accommodations will improve their performance do both themselves and the employer a favor.

Some Things to Know About Requesting an Accommodation:

1. Requesting an Accommodation:
   - If you experience difficulties at work due to a health condition, you have the right to request an accommodation from your employer.
   - Make this request in writing, describing the specific work limitation and proposing potential accommodations.
   - Common accommodations include flexible work schedules, access to meals/snacks, assistive technology, and sign language interpreters.
2. The Interactive Process:
   - After requesting an accommodation, engage in an interactive process with your employer.
   - Together, identify a suitable accommodation that allows you to perform essential job functions.
   - While you can propose solutions, your employer is not required to provide the exact accommodation you request.
   - Be flexible and find a solution that meets both your needs and the employer's requirements.
3. Evaluating Accommodations:
   - Once you receive an accommodation, regularly assess whether it's effective.
   - If it doesn't fully support your job performance, communicate this to your employer.
   - Accommodations that worked previously may need adjustments if your health condition changes.
4. Legal Considerations:
   - Employers can legally deny accommodations if they pose an undue hardship or fundamentally alter their business.
   - Remember that the goal is to allow you to perform essential job functions while considering practical limitations.
   - Seek legal advice if needed.

QUESTION: What if I feel that the employer does not have a right to know about my disability?

ANSWER: An employer is prohibited from making general disability or medical inquiries in an interview. They may not ask about current or past medical conditions. However, if a job is offered the employer might require a medical examination if that is a requirement of all applicants who receive a conditional job offer.

You should keep in mind that there is a difference between your disability and your disability job-related accommodation needs. Information about your disability include: its definition, how you acquired it, how it affects your life, its prognoses, any medical treatments, etc. Employers generally have neither the right nor need to know these things.

Disability job-related needs for an accommodation is another issue. If you request a reasonable accommodation, the employer may need to evaluate how you can perform the functions of the job with or without an accommodation. The employer might need information to properly accommodate and evaluate you.

The information the employer would need should be limited to how it affects your ability to do the job. You can discuss this aspect of your disability with the employer without revealing the more personal aspects of your condition.

If you feel uncomfortable about an employer knowing anything about your disability, it is your right not to discuss or disclose it. However, it is important to remember, the employer only has the obligation to accommodate known disabilities.

Ultimately the decision is yours, but the question is, "Are you doing everything you can do to maximize your employment potential, help the employer to hire you, and be the best possible employee you can be?"

QUESTION: How do I bring it up?

ANSWER: It is important to keep the importance of disability within the context of the interview and job. In other words, do not make a bigger deal out of it than it really is. The focus of any interview is who you are, what you can do and why the employer should hire you. The issue of disability and the need for accommodation does not change that in any way.

First present your qualifications for the job. Focus on your ability to do the essential functions of the position. Next bring up the functions that you will need a reasonable accommodation; and focus on the resulting productivity and effectiveness of the accommodation to allow you to perform the job functions.

Do not concentrate on your limitations but stress your ability. Would it be better for a person with a back injury to describe themselves as someone who cannot stand for more than an hour or someone who can stand for up to an hour? They both describe the same situation but the latter one is much more positive because it describes what the person can do, not what the person cannot do.

One of the most important things to remember is that there are plenty of resources out there to help differently-abled people obtain and maintain employment. Here are a lot more resources on disability employment:

General Links:

- DRAPP on transition: https://drcnh.org/disability-rapp/fall-2021-issue-of-disability-rapp-now-available/
- Transition planning flyer: https://drcnh.org/education/transition-planning/
- Employment: Accessing an Inclusive and Safe Work Environment: https://drcnh.org/know-your-rights/accessing-an-inclusive-and-safe-work-environment/
- Employment: Requesting an Accommodation-The Three Step Process: https://drcnh.org/know-your-rights/requesting-an-accommodation-the-three-step-process/
- Know Your Employment Rights Video Series: https://drcnh.org/video-topics/employment/

NH Vocational Rehabilitation and other services:

- About VR | Department of Education: https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/deputy-commissioner/bureau-vocational-rehabilitation/about-vr
- Tools and Resources | Department of Education: https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/deputy-commissioner/bureau-vocational-rehabilitation/tools-and-resources
- DHHS general website for disability information and connections to area agencies: https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/disability-care/developmental-services/services-individuals-developmental
- Listing of agencies by disability category: https://www.disabilityresources.org/new-hampshire.html

- UNH website regarding healthcare issues and resources for the disability community: https://iod.unh.edu/nh-disability-health-program
- NH Department of Education Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation – employment assistance and resources for the disability community: https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/deputy-commissioner/bureau-vocational-rehabilitation
- Disability Rights Center of NH – advocacy and resources for disability rights: https://drcnh.org/
- NH Department of Education – college and career planning for disability community: https://nextsteps-nh.org/toolkits/education-options-after-high-school/college-disability-services-in-nh-and-border-states/

"If I'm in recovery, what do I need to know about working in healthcare or returning to school?"

If you're in recovery and considering working in healthcare, there are several important factors to keep in mind:

1. Self-Care and Support:

Working in healthcare can be demanding and stressful, which may pose challenges for individuals in recovery. It's crucial to prioritize self-care, maintain a strong support system, and have coping strategies in place to manage stressors and maintain your well-being.

2. Boundaries and Triggers:

Healthcare settings may expose you to situations or substances that could potentially trigger cravings or relapse. It's important to establish clear boundaries, recognize your triggers, and develop strategies to cope with them effectively. This may involve setting limits on certain patient interactions or seeking support from colleagues or supervisors when needed.

3. Professionalism and Accountability:

As a healthcare professional, it's essential to maintain professionalism and adhere to ethical standards, including those related to substance use and recovery. This may involve being transparent about your recovery journey with appropriate colleagues or supervisors, seeking guidance or support when facing challenges, and holding yourself accountable for maintaining sobriety while on the job.

4. Seeking Support and Resources:

Don't hesitate to seek support from peers, mentors, or support groups who understand the unique challenges of working in healthcare while in recovery. Many healthcare organizations also offer employee assistance programs (EAPs) or other resources to support employees' mental health and well-being.

5. Self-Awareness and Monitoring:

Stay vigilant about your own well-being and monitor any signs of potential relapse or burnout. If you find yourself struggling, don't hesitate to reach out for help or take steps to prioritize your recovery, even if it means temporarily stepping back from work responsibilities.

6. Advocating for Yourself:

Know your rights and advocate for yourself in the workplace. This may involve discussing any accommodations or support you need to maintain your recovery with your employer, such as flexible scheduling or access to support services.

Overall, working in healthcare while in recovery can be rewarding and fulfilling, but it's essential to prioritize your well-being, set boundaries, seek support, and stay vigilant about your recovery journey. By taking proactive steps to care for yourself and navigate potential challenges, you can thrive in your career while maintaining your sobriety.

Other resources:
https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/workplace-stigma-addiction-2018010513040
https://intercoast.edu/articles/addiction-recovery/

"If I have a CORI record, can I work in healthcare? What do I need to know?"

It's important to know that healthcare employers will conduct a CORI check on all hires. This does not mean that anyone who has been involved in the justice system will automatically be disqualified from employment in healthcare. In fact, there is a "Ban the Box" law that advises employers to hold off on asking the criminal record question until later in the hiring process to allow all people a fair chance to apply and explain their circumstances.

If you are concerned about what will show up in a background check, you should request your own CORI from the NH State Police.

Criminal History Record Requests: To obtain criminal history record information, you may do any of the following:

- Apply in person: walk-in service is provided at the public counter at 33 Hazen Drive, Concord, Room 106A – Valid photo ID is required
- Mail in an application (Notarization is not required).
- A release to a third party (Notarization is not required).
- Request your own "Confidential" (Full) record: When mailing in this request – Notary Public or Justice of the Peace Signature, Date and Seal are required.

Download the Criminal Record Release Authorization Form here:
https://www.nhsp.dos.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt461/files/inline-documents/sonh/dssp2561_vgmedits.pdf

A basic New Hampshire criminal background check will reveal past convictions or pending charges within the state, including both felony and misdemeanor convictions. The information includes the severity of the charges, arrest dates, and any sentencing results.

Again, having a criminal background check come back with a record will not automatically disqualify a person from a healthcare position. There are some offenses that may, but each person is regarded on a case-by-case process. It will be helpful to both the recruiter and applicant to have some tips on how to navigate this conversation.

How do you answer "Have you ever been convicted of a crime?"
It is up to you, but honesty is recommended. On the application, write "will discuss in interview" rather than a lengthy explanation of past convictions. In an interview, keep explanations brief, and stress what you have learned from your conviction and time in prison, how you have changed, and your skills or assets.

Should I mention my misdemeanor in an interview?
You should avoid going into details – If you must answer questions about a criminal conviction, do not expound on the offense. Keep your answers simple and succinct. Details about a misdemeanor or an arrest record will likely just lead to more questions and possible concerns.

How to explain a felony conviction to an employer role play:

EXAMPLE #1 Employer: "I see from your application that you have been convicted of a felony. Will you explain this to me?"

Poor Answer: "Well, I was using drugs at the time, so I wasn't thinking right. My boyfriend was selling drugs. He asked me to hold some drugs for him. The police said I was part of a conspiracy to sell drugs. But I didn't do anything except trust the wrong person. They free-cased me and gave me two years." (*This response will not impress an employer. They will believe the applicant takes no responsibility for his or her own actions*.)

Better Answer: "I'm glad you asked me, because I want you to feel comfortable hiring me. I want to assure you that it had nothing to do with my previous employers. In my past, I was involved with drugs. I made some poor decisions. As a result, I was convicted of distribution of a controlled substance. While I was incarcerated, I took the opportunity to enroll in a drug treatment program. I took several classes and maintained employment in food service. I now have a total of two years of experience in food service. I want to stay in the industry, and learn as much as possible. As a result of my past, when you hire me, your company may be eligible for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program, which can save you up to $2,400. Are you familiar with this program?" (*This response shows the applicant takes responsibility and does not blame others. The second half of the response focuses on the positives. As you consider your own response, be sure to use your own situation to shape your explanation, skills, and positives.*)

Find more helpful examples here:
https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/sites/moed/files/documents/Explaining%20a%20Felony%20Conviction.pdf
https://www.paralegal.edu/blog/how-to-communicate-criminal-history-to-potential-employer

To recruiters, it will be important to take several aspects into account while considering the offense including:

- Applicant's age at time of offense
- Elapsed time since conviction
- Nature and type of offense
- Relevance of crime to position
- Evidence of positive change

Being willing to listen without judgement will create a positive experience for both recruiter and applicant. Conducting the interview with an open mind and an attitude of fairness could help the organization gain a great

employee because he/she wasn't automatically disqualified. A criminal past should not define an applicant's potential.

Why are background checks important in healthcare?[11]
Thorough healthcare background checks help hire the best employees. If an applicant lied about their skills, they may be unable to deliver quality care. Poor past behavior may mean they pose a risk to patients and healthcare facilities. Criminal history reports and reference checks on healthcare workers are the answer.

What typically shows up on a background check?
Criminal records. An employee background check almost always looks at criminal history. The criminal background check typically shows misdemeanor and felony convictions within a specified time period, usually going back about seven years. Search results could also show arrests that didn't result in a conviction.

Most checks also include national sex offender registry searches, searches of federal and state sanctions and exclusion lists, education and employment verifications, professional license verifications, and pre-employment drug tests.

How far back do background checks go in NH?[12]
In New Hampshire, background checks typically go back seven years, following the FCRA guidelines. However, certain types of background checks, like those for high-security or trust positions, may delve deeper into an individual's past.

How long does a misdemeanor stay on your record in NH?
A violation (other than offenses specified under habitual offender laws): 1 year. A Class A misdemeanor: 3 years. A Class B misdemeanor: 3 years. A Class A felony: 10 years.

Will a HIPAA violation show up on a background check?
As such, breaches of HIPAA policy can result in heavy fines and criminal charges. Many covered entities use background checks to screen for people who may pose a risk of violating HIPAA. However, most HIPAA violations may not appear on a traditional background check.

How long does a DUI stay on your record in NH?
10 years

Can felonies be expunged in NH?
In New Hampshire, the law allows the annulment, or erasing, of certain violation, misdemeanor and felony convictions. By annulling your record in New Hampshire, your criminal record will be completely cleared.

Some Job Seekers Can Earn Exemptions or Waivers
Just as many states have recognized the potential risk of hiring someone with a conviction to work in healthcare, many have also recognized it is not fully fair to bar these people always and forever. In the same spirit as "fair chance" legislation, states may provide a method for individuals to obtain a "waiver from disqualification." This formal application process is not similar to an expungement or sealing of a record; it does not alter the individual's

[11] https://iprospectcheck.com/healthcare-background-checks/#:~:text=Healthcare%20background%20checks%20are%20vital,qualifications%20to%20perform%20their%20jobs.
[12] https://researchinc.com/new-hampshire-background-check/#:~:text=In%20New%20Hampshire%2C%20background%20checks,deeper%20into%20an%20individual's%20past

criminal record in any way. Rather, it is an initial determination that the person has permission to seek a job in healthcare.

That does not guarantee the job-seeker a position. However, it does provide a shield against immediate dismissal of their application because of a disqualifying conviction. Exemption waivers often come with multiple requirements, including paying all court fines and fees and waiting several years after the completion of a sentence. Typically, sex crimes are not ever eligible for waivers in any state.

Applicants must provide employers with their exemption when applying to ensure it receives consideration at the appropriate time. You may still deny an applicant who has obtained a waiver based on your personal decisions. On the other side, it will be very difficult for your business to be held negligent or liable for hiring such an individual when the state supplies a waiver.

Does NH have a ban the box law?
New Hampshire passed House Bill 253, which creates a statewide Ban the Box law. Employers may not include questions about arrests, charges, convictions or criminal violations on job applications.

What Shows Up on a Background Check for Employment in New Hampshire?
What a background check for employment in New Hampshire might reveal will depend on which reports you request. Most employers in New Hampshire ask for information about their applicants' criminal history, past employment, educational attainment, and credentials.

Applicants for positions in which driving is required will likely also undergo checks of their driving records. Many employers also ask for pre-employment drug tests[13] of their candidates. A pre-employment background check may also include the following information:

- Non-annulled felony and misdemeanor convictions
- Pending criminal cases
- Arrests resulting in convictions from the past seven years
- Employment history
- Address history
- Education history
- Appearance on the sex offender registry[14]
- Appearance on the Domestic Terrorist Watch List

What Disqualifies You From Employment on a Background Check in New Hampshire?
Multiple things can disqualify applicants for jobs on pre-employment background checks in New Hampshire. A few of the most common reasons why an applicant might be denied employment are:

- Certain Criminal Convictions - Not all criminal convictions will disqualify an applicant. However, if an applicant has a criminal record that directly relates to the position for which he or she has applied, an employer can decide against hiring him or her based on that information.
- Lies About Past Employment - Some applicants lie about holding past jobs or their dates of employment. People might lie about their past employment to try to conceal gaps in employment or to claim more experience than they have. When an employer asks for employment verification on a pre-employment screening, an applicant who has lied will quickly be denied employment.
- Lies About Education - Like past employment, another area in which candidates tend to lie on their resumes is their educational history. Lies about education can quickly result in a denial.

[13] https://iprospectcheck.com/pre-employment-drug-test/
[14] https://iprospectcheck.com/sex-offender-background-check/

- Bad Driving Record - An employer that hires people for positions that require driving will likely turn down applicants who have problematic driving records. This is because of potential liability and insurability issues.
- Failed Drug Tests - Many New Hampshire employers conduct pre-employment drug screens as a condition of employment. If an applicant fails a drug test, the employer can deny employment.

Other resources:

- https://iprospectcheck.com/new-hampshire-background-check/#:~:text=New%20Hampshire%20Ban%2Dthe%2DBox,stages%20of%20the%20application%20process
- https://presearchinc.com/new-hampshire-background-check/
- https://www.governmentregistry.org/new-hampshire-background-check

"What other resources are out there to help me be successful in my education and career?"

Help with everything:

- Southern NH Services: https://www.snhs.org/ [snhs.org]
- 2-1-1: https://www.211nh.org/ [211nh.org]
- Find Help: www.Findhelp.org - People are able to put in their zip code and it will show every available resource to them in their area.

Childcare:

- DHHS Childcare Scholarship: https://nheasy.nh.gov/#/ [nheasy.nh.gov]
- Child Care Aware: https://www.nh-connections.org/ [nh-connections.org]
- Head Start/Early Head Start: https://www.snhs.org/child-development [snhs.org]

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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