



Workforce Train & Educ Coord Board
2023-25 First Supplemental Budget Session
Policy Level - LP - LPN Apprenticeship Continuation

Agency Recommendation Summary

The developing Home Care Aide/Nursing Assistant-Certified to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Registered Apprenticeship Program has made significant strides towards establishing a nursing career pathway that is an alternative to traditional nurse training. The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program will open career opportunities to entry-level staff in the long-term care (LTC) sector into positions of greater responsibility and financial success while continuing their current employment during training. Funding through FY27 will allow two full cohorts of apprentices to complete the Registered Apprenticeship Program and will allow us to support program expansion and measure the program's impact through evaluation while building sustainability after state funding ends. The cost of this continuation funding is \$2.4 million over the FY26 – FY27 biennium.

Fiscal Summary

| Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i> | Fiscal Years | | Biennial | Fiscal Years | | Biennial |
|---|--------------|------|----------|--------------|---------|----------|
| | 2024 | 2025 | 2023-25 | 2026 | 2027 | 2025-27 |
| Staffing | | | | | | |
| FTEs | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 2.9 |
| Operating Expenditures | | | | | | |
| Fund 001 - 1 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 | \$2,400 |
| Total Expenditures | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 | \$2,400 |

Decision Package Description

Licensed Practical Nurse Registered Apprenticeship for LTC settings

The Workforce Board was funded in the 2022 state budget to develop a licensed practical nurse (LPN) Registered Apprenticeship Program for home care aides (HCA) and nursing assistants-certified (NAC) in long-term care (LTC) settings. Once complete, this will support recruitment and retention of nursing staff for this critical sector of the healthcare ecosystem and will provide a new earn-as-you-learn pathway for working frontline caregivers with a passion for LTC work to advance into higher responsibility nursing roles. The development and implementation of the HCA/NAC to LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program is an ongoing effort built on the efforts of the Washington State Board of Nursing (WABON). A planning effort by WABON, in collaboration with the Department of Labor and Industries (LNI) and the Workforce Board, was funded by policymakers in 2021. This planning effort identified early adopters and program testers and provided a draft plan for the development of an HCA/NAC to LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program. The work continued following the legislative authorization in 2022, which tasked the Workforce Board, in collaboration with WABON and LNI, with continuing the program development and establishing the framework for implementation. Legislative authority shifted responsibility for implementation to the Workforce Board to avoid conflict of interests that either oversight agency would have.

The Workforce Board is funded through June 30, 2025 for this pilot program. This request is on behalf of the entire project partnership for an additional two years of funding at the same \$1.2M annual appropriation, through June 30, 2027, to allow two full cohorts to complete their LPN credential as well as the necessary time to build out the program to a level where it can be fully employer-sponsored and sustainable. Currently, the state funding will expire before the first cohort has completed their LPN program. Obtaining an extension of funding to keep this project securely financed and moving forward will ensure that the Workforce Board staff and the entire project team can maintain this momentum, interest, and continued enrollment in this program before the full operational and funding transition to the apprentice sponsor, the Washington Health Care Association (WHCA), and employer participants can be handed off.

The program has shown significant progress as the first year of the Workforce Board's management of the state implementation funding is ending. Under the guidance of the three state agencies, employer partners, college partners, and other stakeholders, the program development continues to push towards a Fall 2024 launch date for the first cohort of apprentices. A group of apprenticeship candidates is already advancing through nursing prerequisite coursework in anticipation of this launch date. In addition to the three state agencies, three employers (Pennant, Hyatt Family Services, and Brookdale) with over 50 facilities across the state, and two community colleges (Edmonds College and Yakima Community College) have committed significant time and resources to this project.

Program accomplishments include:

1. A total of 37 HCAs/NACs are currently enrolled in prerequisite coursework.
2. Edmonds College has successfully led a group of nursing educators in the development of a hybrid LPN program. This hybrid program

will serve as the foundation for the apprenticeship coursework in 2024.

3. The Workforce Board has hired and trained two Apprenticeship Navigators who provide 1:1 guidance and resource support to the students currently enrolled in prerequisite coursework at the community colleges. These navigators have assisted the HCAs and NACs with FAFSA/WAFSA applications and accessing wraparound services including childcare, transportation, and tutoring. They will continue to provide that individualized support as students move through the apprenticeship program.
4. The Workforce Board has partnered with Merit, a digital badging company focused on education and workforce, to create a “digital wallet” and data management system. The wallet will provide apprenticeship participants with a way to easily track and share information (with employers) about their academic and clinical progress and credentials as well as providing them with a way to track apprenticeship hours.
5. The Washington Health Care Association, a nonprofit organization representing many of the state’s LTC facilities, has been selected through a competitive RFP process as the apprenticeship sponsor organization to operationalize the LPN apprenticeship.
6. The Workforce Board has partnered with the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to develop an LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program in Washington’s DVA veteran homes. Over the last year, with guidance and support of the Workforce Board, WABON, and LNI, DVA has recruited and hired a Program Navigator to lead an exploratory effort to examine establishing an LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program specifically for the public DVA system. Starting Fall 2023, five NACs will begin prerequisite coursework at Olympic College. DVA recently received a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, administered by LNI, to continue this program development at the state’s veteran homes.

Recently, there has been a great deal of interest expressed in the program from employers, educators, and potential apprentices across the state. The coalition is getting inquiries from employers wishing to offer their facilities as sites for the apprentices while HCAs and NACs alike are routinely inquiring about opportunities for enrollment as apprentices. This request for funding to support two full cohorts through the program through FY27 will allow more certainty in both recruiting new employers and education partners while maintaining the momentum with our current partners.

What is the problem, opportunity, or priority you are addressing with the request?

The demand for LTC is rapidly growing in step with an aging population. By 2030, the population of Washington is expected to grow by 5 percent, and by 25 percent by 2050. However, the number of residents over the age of 65 will grow by 30 percent in 2030, and by 64 percent in 2050. For those over 85, growth is expected to be 58 percent and 246 percent, respectively (OFM, 2022).

Washington’s aging population growth highlights the tremendous challenges to recruit and retain a well-trained, professional LTC workforce.

The current available pool of workers is unable to keep pace with the growing demand for LTC services and supports. This is further complicated by factors related to ongoing staffing challenges that have persisted for years in LTC. The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program creates another career pathway for HCAs and NACs, who have already demonstrated a passion for working in LTC, into nursing opportunities with increased responsibility while earning a living wage. This is a training opportunity geared towards entry-level nursing staff who might not have been able (or never thought they could be successful!) to utilize the traditional education pathways towards LPN and beyond.

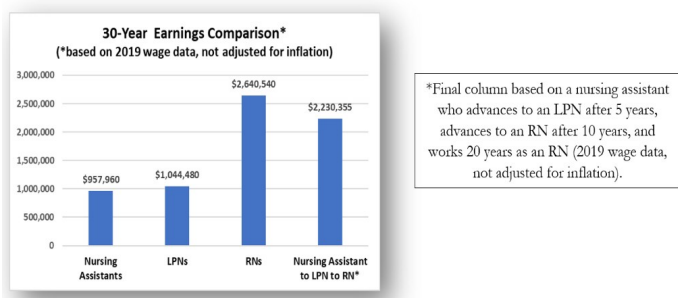
With the workforce challenges facing LTC and healthcare, the need for a consistent and reliable stream of new nursing professionals is more urgent than ever. At the federal, state, and local levels, apprenticeships are now regarded as an innovative way to train new workers while allowing apprentices the opportunity to maintain their employment. For many of the paraprofessionals that are the focus of this effort, traditional pathways for training have not been seen as a viable option. Through this apprenticeship program, many qualified and engaged paraprofessionals can have the opportunity for an increasingly rewarding career in nursing.

The list of achievements of the developing LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program is indicative of its success. Moving towards the enrollment of the first cohort of apprentices in 2024, this is a unique opportunity to help supplement the LTC workforce. The need for LTC in the coming years is clear. This is an opportunity to impact workforce resources as one piece of a larger puzzle. Ultimately, those who will need LTC in Washington, their families, and staff looking to grow in their careers will benefit from this program. Continuing pre-existing funding through FY27 will provide the necessary time and resources to give the best possible chance at long-term stability of the program.

The LPN apprenticeship supports a clear pathway for LTC entry-level staff

The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program will advance the economic growth and stability of staff with arguably the most physically and emotionally taxing positions in LTC: HCAs and NACs. These vital healthcare workers are, by demographic information available, primarily women, and are more likely to be immigrants and people of color. These individuals are often underserved and marginalized members of our community who have few opportunities to advance in their careers due to a variety of factors. This is the first program of its kind in Washington offering a pathway for seamless career progression to these critical partners in the LTC nursing field. Many of these workers lack the resources to pursue training via the traditional route. Financial constraints and family obligations, for example, limit opportunities to grow in their careers.

Ultimately, through this apprenticeship program, these healthcare professionals may continue their education onwards to higher level nursing or other healthcare roles. This access to a seamless career progression can change the lives of HCAs/NACs and their families. Based on 2019 wage data (detailed in Figure 1), registered nurses (RNs) earn over 2.5 times more than NACs, on average (Employment Security Department (2020 for 2019 data)). This amounts to a difference of approximately \$1.6 million in earnings over 30 years (not adjusted for inflation, in 2019 dollars). However, if an NAC advances to an LPN after five years and an RN after ten years, that earnings gap is significantly reduced (by 74 percent) to \$410,185 (not adjusted for inflation, in 2019 dollars).



Currently most NACs are not expected to stay in the field for 30 years—low wages and lack of opportunities for career advancement likely impact their longevity in the profession. The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program can bring welcome relief to a struggling workforce, promote retention and longevity, and ultimately make meaningful contributions to an increased quality of care for LTC recipients by helping to provide a stable workforce to meet their care needs.

Projected workforce demand

Occupation projections of LTC openings are developed by the U.S Department of Labor at the national level and by the Washington State Employment Security Department at the state level. These projections are defined by the Standard Occupation System and based on industry employment estimates within the North American Industry Classification System taxonomy.

LTC settings are expected to experience substantial demand growth between 2025 and 2030. For all direct care workers, the total number of expected openings during this period is 176,000—a 23 percent increase. However, only 13 percent of total openings are expected to be from growth. The remaining 87 percent of openings are predicted to be from turnover.

The fastest growing occupations are estimated to be HCAs, reflecting a trend towards community health and aging in place. The need for NACs will grow substantially as well (refer to Figure 2 for projected openings).

The increasing demand for LTC workers is fueled by a growing number of aging residents who are placing greater demands on the healthcare system across the spectrum. Already, the shortages are creating a ripple effect in healthcare, impacting acute care, home care, and other care venues. These shortages have resulted in massive financial losses across all of healthcare. The establishment of an earn-as-you-learn opportunity for HCAs/NACs creates professional training that meets two needs.

1. Entry level nursing paraprofessionals get access to a career pathway that leads to higher paying healthcare careers with increased responsibility and potential job growth.
2. LTC service providers can promote their staff from within while they remain on the job.

The expected benefits of this program include greater retention of staff, reduced recruitment and training costs, and more open beds that can be used to meet the needs of the aging population. There is substantial research evidence demonstrating that improvements in recruitment and retention in the LTC workforce directly translates to measurable improvements in quality care outcomes. More open beds in LTC mean that hospitals may be able to transfer patients no longer in need of critical acute care from their facilities into appropriate care services. This frees acute care beds for critical need patients.

What is the relevant history or context in which the DP request is made?

The challenges associated with staffing in the LTC industry are not new. For decades, the alarm has been sounding about the impacts that staffing shortages, impacted by turnover and low recruitment into healthcare, will have on LTC services and supports in Washington and beyond. The challenges the industry has faced, and continues to suffer through, have directly contributed to the current state of LTC in Washington and across the nation.

Across the board in healthcare, staffing shortages impact the ability of LTC providers to support persons in need of care. This affects the ability of acute care providers to transfer patients to post-acute and community LTC settings. Acute care beds are filled with patients no longer requiring this level of care, but providers are unable to discharge these patients to more appropriate settings, such as skilled nursing facilities. Patients languish in acute care settings while the providers offer care with insufficient reimbursement for their services. This results in cost inefficiencies and financial losses that run into the billions of dollars, threatening the very life of acute care settings.

When considering the challenges that have contributed to the staffing crisis in LTC, several factors play a role in the ability to recruit and retain workers. The number of new staff positions that are needed now, and that continues to grow, pales in comparison to the number of positions that are currently available due to staff terminations (voluntary and involuntary). Studies in the state looking at caregivers with the least amount of formal professional education and training in healthcare, HCAs and NACs, have indicated that turnover contributes most to the projected need for these entry level staff. Greater than 75 percent of the projected job openings among the lowest paid LTC workers are the result of separations from LTC providers (Detailed in Figure 2).

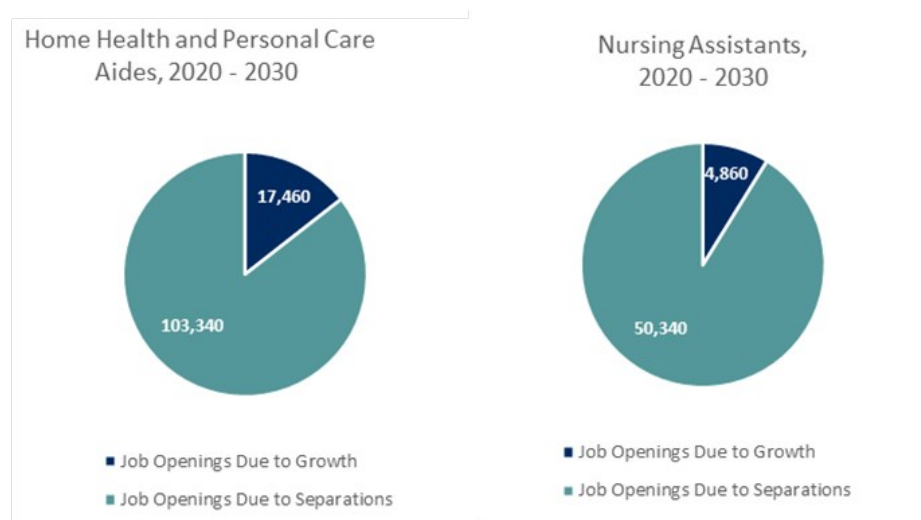


Figure 2: Staff position (new vs separations)

Source: WA State Employment Security Department

The question at hand is this: How does one reduce the turnover rate and recruit new staff? Preventing turnover presents a much greater challenge. Turnover is inevitable; family emergencies, better job opportunities, career changes, and burnout are only a few of the factors involved. However, turnover can be reduced. There is a broad range of studies offering evidence of targeted efforts to reduce turnover. Pay and benefits, **education leading to career growth and advancement**, meaningful interactions with management, and feelings of job satisfaction and engagement are contributing factors in the reduction of turnover rates in LTC.

Another factor, inadequate training, not only leads to poor resident outcomes but can contribute to staff turnover as well. Research conducted in 2015 by the University Red Cross College of Nursing in Seoul, South Korea in collaboration with the University of Maryland School of Nursing in Baltimore, titled “Work-related factors, job satisfaction and intent to leave the current job among United States nurses,” found that **high-**

quality training not only reduces staff turnover but leads to higher levels of job satisfaction.

Why is this the opportune time to address this problem?

Policymakers and the community at large have embraced registered apprenticeships as viable training strategies for a wide range of sectors with many positive aspects. They are an alternative to traditional training models and allow apprentices to remain employed and continue drawing a salary. The apprentices remain active members of their employers' staff, preventing additional lost staff at a time when staffing in LTC is critical. Further, many NACs in this program are from communities that have been historically underserved and marginalized. Ultimately, this will create a staffing pipeline that increases diversity among nursing professionals in positions of higher responsibility and greater compensation.

Have you previously proposed this request? If so, when and how was it received in the budgeting process at that time?

This is continuation funding for a proposal initially made in 2021 by the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (now Washington State Board of Nursing) and funded to the Workforce Board in 2022. The Workforce Board is proposing funding for an additional two years through FY27 so that the Workforce Board and project partners can ensure two cohorts of apprentices complete the apprenticeship before transitioning the Registered Apprenticeship Program to the industry sponsor. This will provide support to build sustainability and afford an opportunity for a thorough evaluation of the program's success and effectiveness.

What is your proposal?

How do you propose to address this problem, opportunity, or priority?

An uninterrupted continuation of this project, which was authorized in the 2022 budget, will provide an opportunity for two cohorts of apprentices to complete the program and for the Workforce Board and other partners to conduct appropriate evaluations. New apprenticeships typically take several years to launch, so this extension will allow for the project team to fully develop and establish the program, including baseline performance metrics, and will allow for time for the sponsor (WHCA) to develop the program into a model that can be sustainable outside of state funds.

Why is this proposal the best option?

This program has coupled significant commitment by engaged and contributing stakeholders with dedicated resources already authorized for this effort. This proposed funding extension provides an opportunity for continuation of a program which has been significantly developed. To end the project in 2025 would mean that the state is ending funding before a single cohort has completed their apprenticeship program. This request supports the completion of two full LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program cohorts and allows for more meaningful program evaluation before it becomes fully employer supported.

Identify who will be affected by this DP and how?

The LTC industry has recently witnessed radical changes across the spectrum and expects more changes related to mandatory staffing in the near future, the impacts of which could be profound for the LTC industry and those needing care in the future. The ability to bring another option for career growth into the picture has the potential to positively impact not only the LTC industry, but all healthcare services across the state.

Significant impacts could be seen on the following:

- Direct care staff (HCAs, NACs, LPNs, RNS)
- Acute care services
- LTC services
- Aging residents in need of LTC services of all types

- Families of residents needing LTC services
- Business community
- Communities at large

How many clients will or will not be served? Served by whom?

Estimating the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program's impact on a specific number of clients will depend upon the number of HCAs/NACs that enroll in the program. Interest is high for this pilot project as a career development option. HCAs and NACs will be the most obvious to benefit with new opportunities for career growth and concurrent financial gains. By promoting a stable and popular career pathway from entry-level nursing to mid-level nursing (LPN) and beyond, the LTC sector's ability to recruit and retain quality staff will certainly improve. With a more stable workforce, LTC services will be able to offer services to more of the aging population. Acute care services will benefit from an improved capacity to transfer patients into appropriate LTC services. People in need of services will have more options and access to needed care. Family members who care for relatives will also have a greater number of options, which will allow them to remain engaged and productive in the workforce. Consequently, businesses will be able to continue growing their services as their staff will be able to focus on their work, resting assured that their family member is safely cared for. In the long term, the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program could be part of an overall strategy for growing an LTC workforce with potential influences on multiple aspects of local and state communities. Discontinuing support of the development of this pilot program could seriously curtail a promising opportunity to train and recruit new nurses — a critical need in this state.

What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?

The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program is one piece of a complex solution to LTC staffing challenges. The extension of financial support of the Registered Apprenticeship Program will guarantee that the pilot program, which has undergone significant development, will continue uninterrupted through 2027. Doing otherwise could seriously impact the confidence of the students, businesses, and colleges who have put so much into the development of this program.

Additional funding will buy the project time to continue the development process, seek input from those directly impacted, and implement a plan for sustainability. This package will provide the needed resources for HCA/NAC support, education components, sponsor development, and administrative support, including monitoring and evaluation efforts. The requested funds will continue to be administered through the Workforce Board as the Legislature directed in the 2022 budget.

What alternatives did you explore and why was this option chosen?

The Workforce Board, in collaboration with the project team, has explored options regarding the request for continuation funding for the development of this pilot apprenticeship. Ultimately, the project team has concluded that any interruptions in or doubts about funding would risk significant damage to program participants and serious harm to stakeholder relations and the public-private partnerships supporting the pilot LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program.

At the end of FY27, the program is expected to be self-sustaining with opportunities for expansion across the state. The Workforce Board and its partners will evaluate the program's success and future needs to determine its effectiveness. Ending the program in FY25, before the first cohort of HCAs/NACs have completed their apprenticeship, could significantly impact sustainability. Waiting until the 2025 Legislative Session to ask for this continuation leaves doubts among the stakeholders about the program's future until the end of April or early May 2025 when the budget is signed. This leaves little room for planning or any reasonable certainty about the stability of the project.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:

The Workforce Board is proposing that the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program is funded for an additional two years through FY27 to ensure two cohorts of apprentices may complete the program before the project is transferred to the industry sponsor. This will provide support

to build sustainability and afford an opportunity for a thorough evaluation of the program's success and effectiveness.

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

The purpose of this request is to solicit support to continue developing the pilot HCA/NAC to LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program through the end of FY27. Funding through the end of FY25 was already included in the 2022 budget authorization of the apprenticeship development program.

State Employee Staffing Costs

Deputy Executive Director (WMS3), 10% FTE, is a senior leadership position responsible for overall staff and project management as well as being the liaison between the Governor's office and the legislature.

Long-Term Care Policy Manager (WMS2), 20% FTE, is the lead coordinator at the Workforce Board for the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program. This role is responsible for overseeing project/program deliverables, such as annual reports to the state legislature on the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program's progress. This role provides extensive outreach to various public and private sector stakeholders.

Healthcare Workforce Senior Researcher (WMS2), 30% FTE, is the lead researcher for the LTC Initiative. This role is responsible for developing and conducting the monitoring and evaluation efforts and performance management of the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program. This includes identifying, collecting, and analyzing relevant data for the purposes of establishing baseline performance metrics and program outcomes. This role is responsible for the research components of the Initiative's annual reports to the legislature.

Long-Term Care Policy Associate (MA4), 20% FTE, is a management analyst role tasked with providing research, analysis, and policy work, supporting the work of the Long-Term Care Policy Manager and Healthcare Workforce Senior Researcher.

LPN Apprenticeship Navigators (MA4), 2 FTE, are positions that provide key wraparound services supporting participants throughout the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program, including support during the prerequisite phase and the apprenticeship phase.

Administrative Assistant (AA4) 10% FTE, will provide ongoing logistical support to the staff and project convening, including logistical support. This includes scheduling meetings for the various public-private sector stakeholders, any travel arrangements, accommodations, etc.

Program Support and Operations

Sponsor Setup and Operations, estimated at \$350,000/year in FY26 and FY27, is a contract with the Washington Health Care Association to staff the apprenticeship committee, budget, and other business operations of the sponsorship. They will ensure the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program complies with all applicable federal, state, and local rules. This contractor will conduct ongoing required sponsor activities and program operation for implementation of the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program.

HCA/NAC Tuition Support, at \$200,000/year, is an interagency agreement with participating community colleges to subsidize the tuition and fees necessary for participants to gain admittance into the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program and throughout their LPN coursework. Students are required to file for FAFSA/WAFSA and utilize those funds before this resource is available.

General Apprenticeship Program Support, at approximately \$140,000/year provides flexible funds to support urgent/immediate needs for the program or ongoing development of resources. This could include skills labs, tuition waivers, and other supports for HCAs/NACs and employer partners in the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), at approximately \$42,000, is an interagency agreement to further support the establishment of an LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program for employees at DVA LTC facilities. DVA support will be provided to the students in their program similarly to the tuition support referenced above.

Workforce Assumptions:

See detailed assumptions in the previous section.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

The Governor's Results Washington goals are perfectly aligned with the goals of this program. The workforce crisis in the LTC industry is creating significant challenges in all areas of healthcare across the state. Facility closures, diminished availability of care services, and the impact on personal and business finances are only a portion of the consequences that workforce shortages are creating. The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program creates another avenue for healthcare training and career development that can address the number of new nurses needed in the state over the next decade.

Goal Area/Priority: Prosperous Economy

The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program enhances the draw into the HCA/NAC professions by adding a pathway into a licensed nurse role, advancing their education, career, and income.

Goal Area/Priority: World Class Education

The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program provides meaningful, real world job experiences to individuals already working in LTC facilities—helping them to earn-as-they-learn and receive clinical credit for their work.

Goal Area/Priority: Healthy and Safe Communities

The ultimate purpose of this proposal is to increase the size of the qualified nursing workforce to meet the care needs of the public, particularly those receiving LTC services. This proposal supports the health and safety of the most vulnerable in our population.

Goal Area/Priority: Efficient, Effective, Accountable Government

This entire proposal builds on the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion. It recognizes the significance of HCAs and NACs and includes them explicitly in the continuum of nursing. It recognizes the racial and ethnic imbalance in nursing, where greater diversity is found in the lower wage HCA and NAC positions while higher wage LPN and RN positions lack diversity. It creates an educational and career pathway for HCAs and NACs to advance in their careers to LPNs, supporting greater diversity and equity in nursing. Finally, it emphasizes the need for data collection and analysis to quantify needs, evaluate progress and trends, and inform decision-making.

How does the package support the agency's strategic plan?

The Workforce Board is described as "the hub" of the state's workforce training system, a central coordination point that gives Washington strategic direction toward common goals. The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program clearly falls in line with the agency's strategic direction. It is creating additional opportunities to fill the needs of the state's struggling LTC workforce.

The Workforce Board's strategic plan, [Talent and Prosperity for All](#), is currently under development for our updated 2024 state and federal submission. Two specific goals where this project is particularly relevant in the current planning effort are in our work around improving Job Quality and Increased Business Engagement.

Performance Outcomes:

Performance outcomes

During the first year since offering opportunities to enroll in prerequisite course work, 37 HCAs/NACs employed by three employer groups have joined the pilot apprenticeship program. Other inquiries from employers and workers across the state not associated with either of the three employer groups suggest strong interest in this opportunity.

Expanding the number of apprentices will be limited only by the number of LPN program slots offering the required related supplemental instruction (RSI), currently at Edmonds College. If more institutions commit to this program, these numbers will increase across the state.

The expansion of the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program has been discussed among non-participating organizations since the start of 2023. Other LTC service providers are awaiting their opportunity to engage in this program because their needs are so pronounced.

Continuing this program to allow for two full cohorts to complete their LPN credential and apprenticeship will provide the best possible opportunity for long-term program success. Current funding, as noted, ends before even the first cohort has completed their apprenticeship program. The success of this apprenticeship program will incentivize future HCAs/NACs to enter the LTC workforce as a viable means of career development within the nursing profession. Attracting more entry-level staff is critical, given the substantial losses the LTC sector experienced over the pandemic.

Monitoring and evaluation built Into the pilot

Funding for continuation of the pilot LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program includes a monitoring and evaluation component. The Workforce Board will establish baseline metrics for HCA/NAC retention rates, earnings, and hours worked to compare retention rates, earnings, and hours worked for HCAs/NACs in the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program. The first two apprenticeship cohorts will also establish baseline completion rates, earnings, and hours worked for the program. In addition, a pre-post comparison of wages and hours worked for those in the program and after program exit for both program completers and non-completers will be undertaken. An additional sub-group analysis of examining equity of outcomes will also be conducted.

Agency Activity Inventory

The LPN RAP pilot is a special project initiated by a 2022 budget proviso and is aligned with Continuous Improvement of the Workforce System under the Agency Activity Inventory section A005. The LPN RAP will test a new service delivery model, registered apprenticeship in nursing professions, to create an alternate talent pipeline for nursing professionals.

Equity Impacts

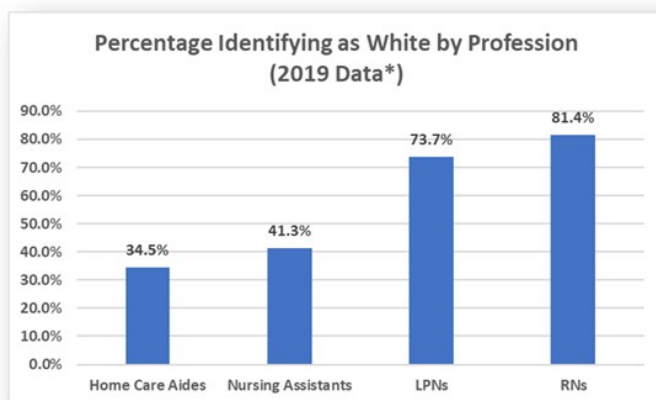
Community outreach and engagement:

The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program is intended to support a population of healthcare workers that have a high percentage of families living in poverty and are much more likely than the general population to be people of color, with one-third of the LTC workforce consisting of immigrant/refugee populations (US Census, 2020). The program's outreach and engagement efforts offer marginalized populations an opportunity to gain access to a career pathway that is a non-traditional education progression. This is also a program that can be implemented in rural and underserved communities.

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

These findings strongly suggest there is a disproportionate impact in terms of career progression within the healthcare sector, and this program will provide greater opportunities for advancement in LTC staffing.

The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program supports equity by increasing racial and ethnic diversity in nursing. The percentage of individuals identifying as white (Figure 3) is much lower in the lower wage HCA/NAC professions than in higher wage nursing professions. According to 2019 US Government data, synthesized by Data USA, the greatest racial and ethnic diversity is found in the lower wage direct care professions (65.5 percent and 58.7 percent for HCAs and NACs, respectively) and diminishes with educational and wage attainment (26.3 percent and 18.6 percent for LPNs and RNs, respectively). The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program supports a much needed educational, career, and wage progression for racially and ethnically diverse HCAs and NACs



*Home care aide percentage is based on students trained in Washington in 2019; nursing assistant percentage represents national workforce data; and LPN and RN percentages reflect Washington licensure data. See footnotes 41-44 for data sources.

Median earnings for paid LTC work are low. According to the Washington Office of Financial Management, per capita personal income for all Washington adult residents was \$67,126 in 2020. The median personal earnings for all direct care workers in the state was about one-third of that, or \$24,000, in 2020 according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

These earnings result in over one-third of direct care workers falling within 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, which qualifies them for public assistance, such as Medicaid, cash transfers, and food and nutritional assistance.

When considering the populations or communities served, this project is seeking to provide a program that would open doors to historically underserved individuals and communities to grow in their careers in LTC and beyond.

Target Populations or Communities:

The target population for this proposal is marginalized communities working within the healthcare sector. Research from the University of California San Francisco, titled "Racial/Ethnic Diversity in the Long-term Care Workforce," published in 2018, found that 59 percent of NACs are people of color, yet the number of people of color in the nursing profession decreases as educational requirements increase, such as LPN and RN positions. In addition, about 85 percent of the LTC workforce are women, according to the latest US Census data.

Other Collateral Connections

Puget Sound Recovery:

This request is not related to Puget Sound recovery efforts. (Not applicable)

State Workforce Impacts:

This ask does not impact any existing collective bargaining agreements or statewide compensation and benefits policy. (Not applicable)

Intergovernmental:

This project is a collaborative effort authorized by the Legislature in the 2022 budget that began in FY23. Three state agencies, Workforce Board, WABON, and LNI have staff working to implement this program. In addition, two community colleges (Edmonds College and Yakima Valley College) are involved in curriculum development and prerequisite and program enrollment.

Stakeholder Response:

The Washington Health Care Association plays an integral part in the development as the sponsor organization for the apprenticeship. Currently, there are three active employer partners involved in the apprenticeship program development and operations. These three employers have been active contributors since the program's conception and continue to be actively involved in the program's operation. The three employers will serve as training agents for the apprentices.

State Facilities Impacts:

This ask does not impact any facilities or workplace needs. (Not applicable)

Changes from Current Law:

There are no changes to existing laws, rules, or contracts. (Not applicable)

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

This is not a response to any litigation, audit finding, executive order, or task force recommendation. (Not applicable)

HEAL Act Agencies Supplemental Questions

Not applicable.

IT Addendum

Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

No

Objects of Expenditure

| Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i> | Fiscal Years | | Biennial | Fiscal Years | | Biennial |
|---|--------------|------|----------|--------------|-------|----------|
| | 2024 | 2025 | 2023-25 | 2026 | 2027 | 2025-27 |
| Obj. A | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$271 | \$271 | \$542 |
| Obj. B | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$96 | \$96 | \$192 |
| Obj. C | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$488 | \$488 | \$976 |
| Obj. E | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$55 | \$55 | \$110 |
| Obj. G | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$20 | \$20 | \$40 |
| Obj. N | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$242 | \$242 | \$484 |
| Obj. T | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$28 | \$28 | \$56 |

Agency Contact Information

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