

# LPN Apprenticeship Program Continuation



## Let's finish the job: Without action, funding ends soon for innovative apprenticeship

The Workforce Board seeks \$2.4 million for FY26 and FY27 to finish building the Licensed Practical Nurse Registered Apprenticeship program. We are creating a new nursing career pathway, but without action, funding will run out before the program has a chance to finish even the first cohort of apprentices. These funds will ensure that two full apprentice cohorts complete their studies and allow the Workforce Board and partners to evaluate the results. This funding also supports the development of an LPN apprenticeship program with the state Department of Veterans Affairs.

Washington's population is aging and the long-term care workforce faces major staffing challenges. This apprenticeship offers new opportunities to home care aides and nursing assistants to move into stable, family-wage jobs. The program aims to be self-sustaining by 2028.

## Aging population meets major workforce shortage

The available workforce is unable to keep pace with the growing demand for long-term care services and supports. This is further complicated by high levels of turnover, burnout and longtime lack of social recognition and respect. Average annual turnover rates for direct care workers are about 50 percent. Turnover is also expensive, costing employers significantly.

These staffing challenges were further compounded by the pandemic. If the status quo remains, Washington will face an even greater healthcare crisis by 2030 when the number of people who need services will dramatically outpace the number of available workers.

The Workforce Board, Washington State Board of Nursing, L&I, and the Washington Health Care Association are leading the creation of the new apprenticeship program. Highlights include:

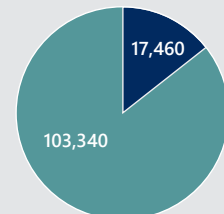
- Forty workers already enrolled in prerequisite coursework.
- Three employer partners representing 50 long-term care facilities across WA.
- Hybrid curriculum under review.
- Two Apprenticeship Navigators providing supports to students and employers.

## Impact Highlights

- Funds two full cohorts of apprentices (current funding ends halfway through the first cohort's LPN program).
- Registered apprenticeship provides new career opportunities for healthcare professionals.
- Keeps workers on the job while advancing their skills and training.
- Higher-wage career nursing professions (RNs and LPNs).
- Reduces student loan debt among some of the lowest paid healthcare professionals.
- Improves recruitment and retention among entry-level professionals.

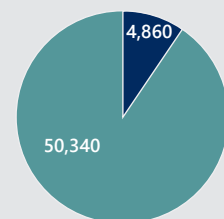
## High Turnover

Home Health and Personal Care Aides, 2020-2023



- Job Openings Due to Growth
- Job Openings Due to Separations

Nursing Assistants 2020-2023



- Job Openings Due to Growth
- Job Openings Due to Separations

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Washington State Employment Security Department



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