Establishing a Licensed Practical Nurse Apprenticeship Program

Final Report prepared for the

Washington State Governor's Office
and Washington State Legislature

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Washington Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

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I. Overview

The Legislature directed the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) to collaborate with the Washington Board of Nursing (WABON), the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council (at the Washington Department of Labor and Industries – LNI), educators, and others to explore and develop innovative and equitable education pathways for long-term care (LTC) workers. This included the development of a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) registered apprenticeship.[1]

This report has been prepared for policymakers as a collaboration of the main contributors of the apprenticeship, and includes the following:

- Lessons learned and recommendations from each of the two organizations developing apprenticeship programs – the Washington Health Care Association and the Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA).
- A summary of agency and organization efforts supporting program development.
- The lead education institution providing related supplemental instruction (RSI) for the apprentices.
- The value of accelerated Nursing Assistant Certified (NAC) to LPN training programs including earn while you learn options, options supported by workers and employers alike.
- Other appendices include key acronyms used in report, legislative provisos and statutory language, and an overview of the LPN Apprenticeship Navigator position, a key role in supporting LTC apprentices.

Major Accomplishments

The LPN Registered Apprenticeship was developed as an innovative training model to address recruitment and retention in long-term care as a collaborative effort of three state agencies, an employer sponsor, community and technical colleges, employer partners, and committed student participants. Successful accomplishments include:

- On Oct. 17, 2024, the first NAC to LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program (LPN RAP) was approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship Training Council.
- WABON, in collaboration with nursing educators, adopted existing curriculum for use by the program as part of the approved LPN apprenticeship standards.
- This LPN apprenticeship program was employer-sponsored by the Washington Health Care Association (WHCA), with related supplemental instruction delivered by Edmonds College.
- Three employers, representing over 50 skilled nursing and assisted living facilities, contributed to each phase of apprenticeship development; Brookdale Senior Living, the Ensign Group, and Hyatt Family Services. The three employer representatives provided direction leading to the recruitment of NACs and Home Care Aides (HCAs) from their facilities. HCAs participated in a bridge program to NAC to allow them to fully benefit from the training.
- In November 2022, the three employer groups began recruitment of staff to enroll in the mandatory prerequisite coursework needed to qualify for admission into the developing apprenticeship.
- Edmonds College established a prerequisite sequence of coursework for entry into the LPN Apprenticeship and reduced coursework to 35 credits.
- Seventy-one students have enrolled or are currently enrolled in the pre-requisite coursework for LPN training. Nine students have completed their prerequisites, and four other students are actively engaged in

[1] See list of legislative provisos and legislation in Appendix F.

the prerequisite training. Four apprentices are actively engaged in LPN training at Edmonds College. At WDVA, three NACs are actively engaged in sponsored LPN training through Olympic College while another is enrolled outside of the WDVA NACs. Another three students who were engaged in the prerequisite coursework supported by the Workforce Board enrolled in Edmonds College's traditional LPN program this Fall.

- Thirty students were initially screened for the initial cohort (Fall 2024) of the apprenticeship program. After assessing college readiness, including language skills and literacy, eight apprentices were enrolled in the program in October 2024. Four apprentices are still actively engaged and expected to complete their training in late Spring 2026.

In a parallel effort, WDVA developed a program to train LPNs with an on-the-job training component and wraparound services, with the goal of a registered apprenticeship program in the future.

- WDVA recruited their incumbent NACs to train for the high demand, and higher paid role, of LPN.
- An initial cohort at the Port Orchard Veterans' Home completed prerequisite coursework in less than a year at Olympic College. Three of the four students entered the LPN training program at Olympic College, and as of July 2025 are in training and employed at the Port Orchard Veterans' Home.
- The success at WDVA was facilitated by the lessons learned from the initial recruitment of NACs in the apprenticeship program and helped with the development of the recruitment efforts for new NACs.
- Based upon the success from their initial cohort in Port Orchard, WDVA has expanded their LPN training program to the other three homes across the state and have recruited seven NACs to begin their pre-requisite coursework.

Key Challenges

Along the path to development of these nursing education pathways, the coalition of agencies, employers, professional associations, education providers and students encountered many challenges. Key challenges include:

- **College readiness:** The need for basic skills education and prerequisite coursework was a limiting factor. When assessing NAC's interest in becoming LPNs, the majority of candidates had a need to complete basic education or other prerequisite coursework. Finding the necessary resources and time is important to ensure equitable access to the program while securing an adequate number of qualified candidates.
- **College associated costs:** The cost of going to college, transportation, foregone wages when doing prerequisites, and childcare are barriers that limit the number of students who are willing to pursue this pathway, or cause students to drop from the program. Eligible students can get a Washington College Grant to cover many costs. Eligible costs are established by financial aid policies that guide the college financial aid programs. In addition, the college financial aid officers enjoy leeway in decisions regarding the disbursal of funds.
- **Variable prerequisites between colleges:** Prerequisite coursework requirements for LPN programs are established at each community college. The variability creates challenges for students who complete prerequisite coursework at one college and nurse training at another. Establishing a shared prerequisite curriculum would simplify the training requirements.

- **Time and resources for education providers:** The time and resources needed by education providers to establish and offer related supplemental instruction for the apprenticeship is a barrier to college offerings in various parts of the state. Specifically:
  - The time it takes to develop the LPN program involves getting approval from a number of entities: through national institutional accreditation, national nursing education accreditation, as well as from WABON.
  - Lack of qualified nurse educators and preceptors to develop and oversee programs.
  - Forgone tuition, due to the state mandated tuition waiver for registered apprenticeship courses at community and technology colleges, makes the program more costly for education providers. (*More on this in the individual program write ups.*)
  - Enrolling enough students to offset costs.
- **Staffing and service costs for employers:** WHCA, the employer sponsor for the first approved apprenticeship, reported a number of difficulties that hampered the program and threatened sustainability:
  - Employers experience staffing difficulties related to the apprentice training, including filling unstaffed positions while NAC is in training, and
  - Funding preceptors to support the learners.

The process to establish an apprenticeship program is complex. Given the challenges and costs for administration of the program, WHCA recently announced a decision to not sponsor a second cohort (*see Appendix C for more details*), though they will continue the support of the current cohort through completion. WDVA is currently pursuing an on-the-job training (OJT) model with a long-term goal of developing an apprenticeship program but is still working on addressing challenges to make an apprenticeship possible.

While the barriers are significant, the value of enabling students who might not otherwise have the opportunity for career growth is still worth pursuing. **This multi-organization coalition is still committed to this concept.** There are additional avenues to pursue, such as engaging in a multi-employer sponsorship model, and working with education providers and employers to coordinate economies of scale that make the program feasible and sustainable from all perspectives. To this end, we offer the following recommendations as potential next steps.

Recommendations

1. Establish a support infrastructure to assist low-income NAC's while completing their apprenticeship training, including prerequisite courses.
2. Review opportunities to compensate education providers to both establish and provide the RSI that exceeds 540 hours for LPNs. The funding limitations for apprenticeship RSI is a challenge for institutions, especially for already competitive programs.
3. Provide financial incentives for employers to participate, considering the low profit margins in this industry.
4. Explore a multiple sponsor approach to create economies of scale to offset costs for employers and education providers.
5. Explore OJT models that allow for reduced program time.

II. Lessons Learned

As we look back at the complex process that was needed to establish this "first of its kind" training model for LPNs, successes and challenges become evident. The goal of this effort was to help meet employers' acute need for LPN's, a vital in-demand occupation in long-term care. The employers engaged in this process have been encouraging and supportive of the apprentices throughout the preliminary coursework and the apprenticeship. An NAC to LPN Registered Apprenticeship model was developed, approved and implemented. A single, small cohort of NACs are in the process of completing and will advance up the nursing career ladder. While this program is preparing only a small fraction of the numbers of LPNs needed, LTC industry and agencies are still exploring opportunities to capitalize on the momentum of this interest in earn-as-you-learn pathways.

From the beginning, the LPN apprenticeship model has drawn great interest from employers and NACs/HCAs. The NAC to LPN RAP is viewed as one of many options for nursing education and career development. For many minority and marginalized persons in healthcare, this addition to the nursing career pathways is a way to advance one's skillsets while avoiding the burdensome financial costs associated with postsecondary education.

There have been many valuable lessons learned from the effort. WHCA Apprentice, LLC successfully launched a small cohort of eight apprentices in the initial offering. Four are still active and will complete their apprenticeships in the Spring of 2026. This program has seen 71 students engage in pre-requisite coursework for the apprenticeship over the past two years. **Nursing educators at Edmonds College report the NACs engaged in the apprenticeship have excelled, citing their experience in healthcare as a contributing factor to these students' success.** Support of two apprenticeship navigators to the NACs/HCAs has contributed to the success of many of these students. And a novel program with WDVA has proven effective and is supported by their predetermined eligibility selection process.

The decision not to pursue a second cohort of apprentices was disheartening but emphasized the challenges that many new ventures face. The key factor contributing to the decision was the sustainability of the program. The existing resources are insufficient to meet the needs of this novel apprenticeship. The NACs, as some of the lowest paid caregivers in LTC, struggled financially during their first year of apprentice training. Costs associated with travel and childcare coupled with reduced work hours put the apprentices in financial difficulties. Some of the initial cohort eventually dropped from the program.

Employers, who have enthusiastically embraced the learning model, have expressed concerns about the financial impact on their businesses related to staffing changes and operating budgets. While the LPN RAP had a fiercely committed partner in Edmonds College, they were the only institution that committed to the apprenticeship. Recruitment of colleges to provide the RSI has also been impacted by existing policies regarding tuition for apprentices and the administrative effort involved in running an apprenticeship cohort alongside of an existing traditional program.

Remedies to these challenges are needed before the concept of an LPN registered apprenticeship can be scaled across the state. Eventually, solutions leading to a successful apprenticeship can add to the state's efforts to offer innovative workforce development strategies that can help meet the growing needs of the citizens of Washington and further establishing the state's role as a leader in workforce development.

Appendix A – Contributing Partners

Washington Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board)
Eleni Papadakis, Executive Director
Nova Gattman, Deputy Executive Director
Donald Smith, LTC Workforce Policy Manager
Maddy Thompson, Director of Strategy
Claire Fite, Policy Associate
Michelle Pierce, Administrative Assistant
Rebecca Adams, Apprenticeship Navigator
Erica Wollen, Apprenticeship Navigator
Chris Dula, Healthcare Senior Researcher

Washington Board of Nursing (WABON)
Alison Bradywood, Executive Director
Marlin Galiano, Nurse Consultant
Kathy Moisio, Director of Nursing Assistant Programs
Reuben Argel, Director of Nursing Assistant Education

Washington Labor and Industries (LNI)
Peter Guzman, Apprenticeship Program Manager
Jordan Shepherd, Field Supervisor, Apprenticeship Section
Aubrey Nelson, Apprenticeship Consultant

Pennant Group, Inc.
Mindy Schaffner, Clinical Resource, Education

Hyatt Family Services
Jane Davis, Administrator

Brookdale Senior Care
Misrak Mellsie, District Director of Clinical Services, West Division

Washington Healthcare Association (WHCA)
Carma Matti-Jackson, Chief Executive Officer
Elena Madrid, Executive Vice President for Education & Regulatory Affairs
Dan Scheuler, Apprenticeship Senior Program Manager
Kathrina Goodwin, Program Assistant
Lauri St. Ours, Executive Vice President, Communications & Government Relations
Vicki McNealley, Director of Assisted Living

Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)
David Puente, Director
Cori Morris, Professional Development Navigator, Office of Human Resources
Aschlee Heiny, Professional Development Manager, Office of Human Resources

Edmonds College
Kyra McCoy, Director of Nursing
Julia Erickson, Nursing Program Navigator

Yakima Valley College
Mary Baroni, Nursing Education Consultant
Kristine Tardiff, Yakima Valley Grants Manager
Tammera LaRoue, Director of Grants

Bates Technical College
Johnny Hu, Vice President of Instruction

Appendix B – Frequently Used Abbreviations

AFH	Adult Family Homes
ALF	Assisted Living Facility
ADN	Associate Degree in Nursing
BSN	Bachelor Science in Nursing
BTC	Bates Technical College
CMS	Center for Medicare and Medicaid services
CTC	Community and Technical Colleges
DOH	Department of Health
DSHS	Department of Social and Health Services
DTA	Direct Transfer Agreement
EC	Edmonds College
EPSLO	End of Program Student Learning Outcomes
HCA	Home Care Aide
HRSA	Health Resources Services Administration
LNI	Labor and Industries
LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse
LPN RAP	Licensed Practical Nurse Registered Apprenticeship Program
LTC	Long Term Care
MRPA	Major Related Program Agreement
NAC	Nursing Assistant Certified
NCQAC	Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission
NPAP	Nursing Program Approval Panel
RN	Registered Nurse
RSI	Required Supplemental Instruction
SEIU	Service Employees International Union
SNF	Skilled Nursing Facility
YVC	Yakima Valley College
WABON	Washington Board of Nursing
WDVA	Washington Department of Veterans Affairs
WHCA	Washington Health Care Association

Appendix C – WHCA Apprentice, LLC Sponsor Role

(Author: Washington Health Care Association staff)

On Nov. 9, 2023, WHCA Apprentice, LLC was awarded a $500,000 contract from the Workforce Board to design and implement an LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program (LPN RAP) to address shortages in the LTC workforce. Funding for this effort was established by the Washington State Legislature and Gov. Jay Inslee through ESSB 5187, Chapter 475, (2023).

Washington Health Care Association (WHCA) is the parent organization of WHCA Apprentice, LLC, which serves as the program sponsor. While WHCA is a trade association representing skilled nursing facilities, participation in the apprenticeship program is open to all skilled nursing facilities in Washington regardless of trade association affiliation or membership. State oversight of the program is three-pronged. In addition to the Workforce Board, it includes oversight through WABON and LNI.

Overview

The LPN Apprenticeship pilot program consists of:

- One RSI provider (academic): Edmonds College was the only academic provider to have a curriculum approved by WABON and is the contracted RSI provider.
- Training agents (employers): Skilled nursing facilities are contracted to provide employment, on-the-job training (OJT), and onsite clinicals to the apprentices in the program. Three training agents have active apprentices in the pilot cohort.
- Four active apprentices are in the pilot cohort. Eight apprentices began classes in September 2024. Two withdrew from the apprenticeship program before it was registered on Oct. 17, 2024. A third failed their first quarter at Edmonds College, thereby losing eligibility for the LPN RAP. A fourth failed to meet program standards and was removed by the apprenticeship committee.

The program currently has one dedicated full-time employee, a program manager, and utilizes administrative oversight and centralized operational services through an inter-company agreement with the parent organization, WHCA.

Infrastructure Development

Developing the LPN RAP in ten months and having an infrastructure in place for the first cohort to begin September 2024 was a significant undertaking. WHCA Apprentice, LLC was charged with ensuring compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local rules and laws including those specific to Department of Health (Practical and Registered Nursing) and to LNI (Apprenticeship). The abbreviated timeline and the complexity of multiple layers of agency regulations and law impacted on the infrastructure of the program as follows:

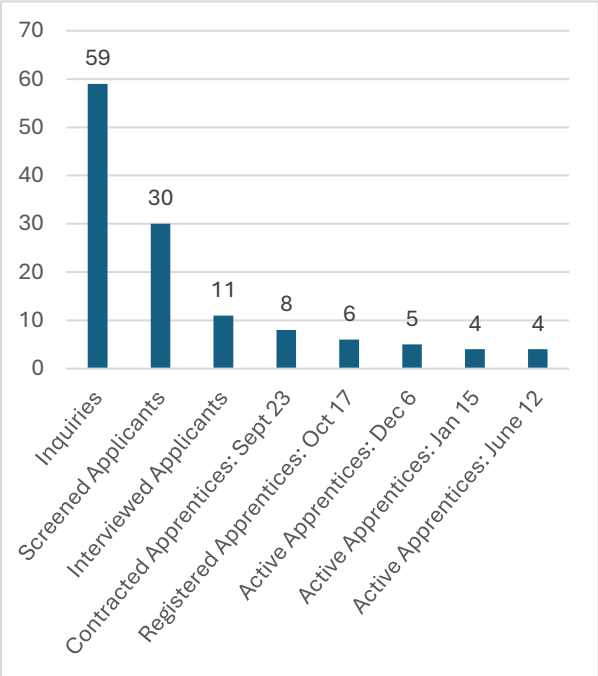
- Because of the clinical skills requirements of practical nurse credentialing, the pilot was isolated to skilled nursing facilities as employers. While other LTC settings were explored, it was found that residential settings do not provide the necessary opportunities for apprentices to learn and practice the needed skills on the job.
- Remote labs were placed on hold. The academic RSI provider did not have the capacity to design and establish remote labs in skilled nursing facilities within the timeframe available. The concept proved to be

too complex to be fully vetted and negotiated alongside other more critical contract negotiations. WHCA Apprentice, LLC grappled with operational and fiscal challenges. Funds for remote labs were not included in WHCA Apprentice, LLC's contract, and therefore fell outside of their negotiating realm. WHCA Apprentice, LLC made the difficult decision to put remote labs on hold with a plan to revisit the topic for a future cohort. Instead, labs for the pilot cohort are all held at the Edmonds College campus, limiting LPN RAP participation to those residing within a commutable distance from Edmonds College.

- The application process for the first cohort of apprentices mirrored minimum qualifications for and timeline of the Edmonds College Practical Nursing program. Initially, the application deadline was set for mid-June, but later it was extended by two months. The sponsor reviewed LPN RAP applications and conducted interviews while simultaneously searching for and negotiating with facilities for the role of providing employment and OJT to potential apprentices as contracted training agents.
- Because there was only one academic provider with a WABON-approved RSI curriculum (Edmonds College), the sponsor deferred to the entrance criteria and academic requirements of Edmonds College. For example, grade requirements for the LPN RAP pilot were set to match the grade requirements that Edmonds College had for its traditional LPN program.
- On October 17, 2024, the Washington State Apprenticeship & Training Council voted in favor of approving the LTC-LPN RAP program standards. Six apprentices were registered and granted credit for OJT and coursework completed to date.

Pilot Cohort

In April 2024, WHCA Apprentice, LLC launched a web interface and began to market the apprenticeship program via social media, WHCA newsletters, and through WABON with the goal of facilitating applications and completing the screening process in June. Because infrastructure was still under development and training agents had not yet been identified, the sponsor made the decision to build an ongoing inquiry allowing potential applicants to interface with staff, ask questions, and seek direction to apply for the program. Once an application was received, sponsor staff worked with the RSI provider to screen the candidate making sure that all screening criteria were met. Criteria included an application to the Edmonds College LPN program, pre-requisite GPA requirements, an application to financial aid, and minimum grades on the standardized exam for nursing school applicants (TEAS test).



While 30 applicants were received, many did not meet the screening criteria. Eight apprentices were approved to begin coursework in September. Since classes began, four apprentices have left the program. As of June 2025, cohort one includes four individuals with diverse backgrounds. Current apprentices range from age 25 to 41. Seventy-five percent of the pilot cohort apprentices identify as mixed race or a person of color including:

- Black/African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Three of the apprentices reported themselves as head of household, with two reporting being responsible for providing care to a child/children or health care support for someone in their household.

Apprentice attrition

Since the program launched in September 2024, four individuals have exited the apprenticeship.

- In October 2024, one apprentice chose to leave the program in order to remain in a non-patient-facing director position at their facility. Program requirements stipulate that apprentices must work in patient-facing NAC roles.
- Another apprentice left in October 2024 due to unwillingness to meet the shift requirements of their training agent, seeking to work no more than one shift per week. Apprentices are expected to work 21–25 hours weekly to stay on track with their OJT.
- In December 2024, one apprentice was removed from the cohort after failing to achieve the required 3.0 grade in the NURS 115 class, a program requirement.
- In January 2025, one apprentice was removed from the cohort after failing to meet OJT standards.

Prior to program commencement, eight apprentice candidates completed a needs survey to provide demographic and support data. Analysis of the four apprentices who left the program revealed common trends:

- All had over 10 years of NAC experience.
- All transitioned from roles with higher wages than NAC positions, such as medical assistant or director of activities.
- Based on this initial review, apprentices with more dependents appear more likely to leave the program. The average number of dependents among the initial September starting cohort was one per apprentice, while those who exited averaged approximately 3.5 dependents.
- All four apprentices who left the program cited financial concerns.

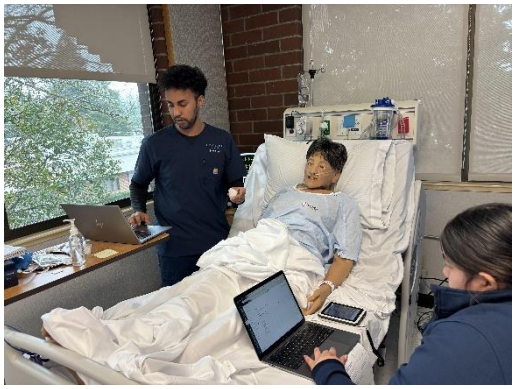
Additional challenges were identified by individual apprentices who exited the program: lack of reliable internet, absence of a support system entering the program, and reliance on public transportation.

Apprentice wraparounds

Recognizing that apprentices are supporting others, working, going to college, and are required to maintain 80% or better score in all academic classes, the sponsor of the program felt it important to provide an optimal opportunity for the apprentice to succeed. A limitation of 35 work hours per week was set for apprentices during the academic year in contracts with the employers. This could negatively impact the financial wellness of the apprentices, so the sponsor has set up “wraparounds” in the form of needs grants and hardship funds for which the apprentices may apply. Other standard supports are included in the program for cohort one, including coverage of 50% of tuition and academic fees, equipment and scrubs, and the availability of loaner computers.

Two apprentices were awarded hardship grant funding in the first quarter of the program. One apprentice received housing support in the form of a rent payment for a month. Another apprentice received transportation support through a month of rental car usage. Both apprentices benefiting from hardship funding exited the program at the end of the first quarter. The sponsor paused hardship grant support in the second quarter while continuing to support apprentices with costs directly related to the apprenticeship program.

Employers (training agents)



In April 2024, WHCA Apprentice, LLC began soliciting skilled nursing facilities to participate in the program as training agents. The sponsor briefed seven companies with approximately 11 buildings as potential candidates to serve as employers (training agents) in the program. The sponsor considered proximity to Edmonds College, the quality scores of the buildings, and the likelihood that the provider could provide a positive experience for the apprentice as criteria for accepting employers as training agents. While all 11 companies expressed support and interest, several felt the program was too risky or costly. Barriers to entry identified by employers included the following:

- Costs of paying higher wages to the apprentice and potentially backfilling for LPNs and/or preceptors while they provide 1:1 oversight, training, and clinicals outweighed the costs of simply paying full tuition for an employee to go through a standard LPN program.
- Concerns about additional scrutiny from state and federal regulatory bodies who may not understand the program and therefore question the apprentice's role in the building and/or the supervisory structure for this individual.
- Being able to meet the state's staffing mandates and pending federal staffing mandates when LPNs/RNs were removed from their regularly scheduled duties in order to attend meetings with the college and while they were providing 1:1 oversight or clinical instruction to the apprentice.
- Additional liability exposure should something go wrong during resident care provided by an apprentice.
- One facility signed an agreement and had an apprentice not qualify for the program.
- One facility had an apprentice leave the apprenticeship program after starting classes, leaving the training agent without an apprentice.

Six buildings represented by two companies signed agreements to participate in the program:

Active Apprentices	Building	Location	Company
1	Bainbridge Island Health & Rehab	Bainbridge	Pennant
2	Mountain View Rehab & Care Center	Marysville	
0*	Olympia Transitional Care & Rehab	Olympia	
0*	Rainier Rehab	Puyallup	
0**	Alderwood Post Acute and Rehab	Lynnwood	Hill Valley
1	Lacey Post Acute & Rehab	Lacey	

* Facility with an agreement to serve as a training agent though does not have an apprentice in the pilot cohort.
** Three apprentices candidates began coursework with this facility as an external hire, however, following the first quarter all three chose to leave the program or were removed due to not meeting program standards.

Pilot funding

The projected costs for the pilot cohort are $1.014 million. In addition to the $500,000 in state funds awarded to the sponsor through the Workforce Board, WHCA Apprentice, LLC secured a federal grant from the United States Department of Labor (DOL) for $599,145. The federal grant has required enrollment of no less than 24 registered apprentices by June 2025. Currently the program has registered five apprentices in the pilot cohort. The sponsor

is collaborating with the DOL to adjust the grant award to support the four pilot apprentices through the conclusion of the apprenticeship program in June of 2026.

Challenges to implementation

Despite the documented successes for this pilot program, a number of associated challenges have hampered the broader deployment of the apprenticeship. During the 2022 legislative session, ESSB5764 passed directing numerous changes to apprenticeship programs in the state. Included in this legislation was a directive that the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) contract with the Ruckelshaus Center at Washington State University to conduct research into the many challenges associated with funding, sustainability and potential application of training hours and RSI towards degree completion as part of the apprenticeship programs in the state. Many of the challenges identified by the contributors to the LPN Apprenticeship are reflected in the multiple reports of Ruckelshaus 2,3,4 as part of a multi-year assessment of the apprenticeship / higher education relationship in the state.

The bulk of the challenges associated with the implementation of the LPN-RAP stem from financial concerns. These are described in more detail below and include:

a. **Wraparound supports for apprentices**
   Challenge:
   Participating apprentices faced financial challenges due to limitations in their work hours. NAC wages are at the lowest end of the scale along the nursing salary continuum. With a 35 hour per week limitation on the number of hours they may work, many apprentices were negatively impacted by a significant reduction in their paychecks. Even among NACs taking pre-requisite coursework, reductions in scheduled work hours created significant financial difficulties.

   Potential solutions:
   Financial pressure impacting apprentices could be mediated by making funds available to be applied toward apprentices' living expenses and incidental costs. Sources of support need be identified and secured for the NACs taking pre-requisite coursework or formally participating in the LPN RAP.

b. **Training agent barriers as identified by WHCA Apprentice, LLC**
   Challenge:
   Costs of paying higher wages to apprentices and potentially backfilling nursing positions for LPNs and/or preceptors while they provide 1:1 oversight, training, and clinicals, outweighed the costs of simply paying full tuition for an employee to go through a standard LPN program.

   Potential solutions:
   Conduct research to verify or refute this perception. Research ways to maximize the return on investment for the employer, including tax credits, supplemental funding through reimbursement sources, or other potential incentives.

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[2] Ruckelshaus Center. 2023. Appendix A. Situation Assessment of Pathways to Higher Education Credentials and Funding for Apprenticeships. Found at Appendix A Ruckelshaus Center Apprenticeship & HE Situation Assessment.pdf

[3] Maller et al. 2023. Appendix B. Apprenticeship and Higher Education. Found at Appendix-B-EDNW-Amended-Research-Report-Appr-HE.pdf

[4] Maller et al. 2024. Appendix D. Demand for Degrees. Perspectives from Apprentices. Found at Appendix-D-EDNW_Demand-for-Degrees.pdf

Challenge:
Concerns about additional scrutiny from state and federal survey agencies who may not understand the program and therefore question the apprentice's role in the building and/or the supervisory structure for this individual.

Potential Solutions:
Develop specialized training for regulators related to the apprentice's role and the stringent rules on oversight by journeyman-level LPNs or RNs.

Challenge:
Being able to meet the state's minimum staffing mandates and pending federal staffing mandates when LPNs/RNs were pulled from their regularly scheduled duties to attend meetings with the college and while they were providing 1:1 oversight or clinical instruction to the apprentice.

Potential solutions:
Employers must recognize the potential return this program offers. Communication with the training agents about the specifics of the program, short- and long-term benefits, and establishment of a strong value proposition are essential to the cultivation of training agents who view this program as a staffing pipeline.

Challenge:
Facilities with low turnover often make great training agents as they have consistent journey-level workers training apprentices. This, however, also often leads to few openings for the apprentice to move into an LPN role. Staff forecasting for training agents to commit to an open LPN role can be unpredictable. State and federal mandates for staffing in LTC facilities make committing future full-time LPN headcount a challenge for facilities. Some apprentices could advance out of employment with their training agent if the training agent does not have open LPN headcount. Additionally, if a training agent has a vacancy in an LPN role, they may not be able to delay hiring a replacement until the apprentice is able to obtain their license.

Potential solutions:
Targeting training agents large enough to have regular turnover without sacrificing quality training is essential to identifying a successful training agent.

c. Sustainability

Employer fees were a significant part of the long-term sustainability plan for this program. However, the pool of potential employers (training agents) relies heavily on Medicaid revenues and does not have the financial margins to contribute fees to support an apprenticeship program. Upon further evaluation of public funding sources, the current financial model for the LPN Apprenticeship Pilot is not viable beyond the first cohort. Given that our state legislature is currently wrestling with a $12 billion budget deficit, and our federal government is going through many initiatives to reduce federal funding, public funds have become unpredictable. WHCA has been collecting and analyzing data from various stakeholders about the pilot and will continue to sponsor the program through the completion of the pilot cohort.

Challenge:
The state mandates that all apprenticeship programs must develop a sustainability plan prior to program approval by the Apprenticeship Training Council. Training agent fees were considered as a significant component of the long-term financial sustainability plan for this program. However, resources for the

pool of potential training agents rely heavily on Medicaid revenues. Participating nursing homes reported they do not have the financial margins to contribute fees to support an apprenticeship program. Additionally, apprentice contributions from a workforce that is typically among the lowest paid of the nursing profession are unrealistic given the other financial challenges noted in this report.

Potential Solutions:
Dedicated long-term sustainability funding will be essential to the success of future NAC to LPN apprenticeship programs.

d. Provision of Related Supplemental Instruction (RSI)

Challenge:
A significant barrier to expansion of the LPN RAP has been the recruitment of qualified providers of RSI. Currently, only one community college is offering RSI to a cohort of LPN apprentices. The LPN RAP has a mandatory 540+ hours of RSI, which must be delivered by nurse educators. Finding and securing qualified RSI instructors is a challenge faced by many educational institutions.

Potential solutions:
Nursing apprenticeships in Washington may find more RSI providers outside of LPN programs.

Challenges:
Further complicating the challenges of recruiting colleges to provide RSI to apprentices is the current statutory mandates regarding funding for apprenticeship RSI5. Two statutory mandates in Washington directly impact this challenge. First, the removal of the full-time equivalence allocation set aside for apprenticeships (2012-2013 Leg session).

Additionally, the Washington Administrative Code (**WAC 131-28-026 Tuition charges for certain ungraded courses) reads***(4)*

(a) The waiver amounts for the following ungraded courses shall conform with the following schedule:

(b) Courses offered for the purpose of satisfying related or supplemental educational requirements for apprentices registered with the Washington state apprenticeship council or federal Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training: A college shall waive one-half of the standard per credit tuition and services and activities fee. The college may convert the credit hour charge to a rounded amount per clock hour. Colleges may deduct the tuition owed from training contracts with apprentice organizations.

[5] Ruckelshaus Center. 2023. Appendix A. Situation Assessment of Pathways to Higher Education Credentials and Funding for Apprenticeships. Found at Appendix A Ruckelshaus Center Apprenticeship & HE Situation Assessment.pdf

Appendix D – Edmonds College

(Author: Edmonds College staff)

Identification & Convening of a NAC to LPN Apprenticeship Curriculum Development Team

Edmonds College received funding from a federal HRSA grant to develop a curriculum for the NAC-LPN-RAP. Initially, three schools agreed to participate in this project: Edmonds College (EC), Yakima Valley College (YVC), and Bates Technical College (BTC). The funds were allocated for faculty and directors from all three institutions to attend curriculum development meetings and to compensate two nursing education consultants for their time spent in meetings and reviewing the work.

These institutions' nursing directors and faculty held several meetings to establish the End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes (EPSLOs) listed below. However, the directors from YVC and BTC ultimately decided they did not have the time or faculty resources to continue participating in the project. As a result, only the faculty and director from EC remained involved in the grant and successfully developed the curriculum on schedule. The withdrawal of the other two schools significantly increased the workload for the faculty and director at EC during the development year.

End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes (**ESPLOs)**

- Demonstrate professional collaboration and communication with healthcare team members.
- Demonstrate therapeutic and culturally competent communication to provide person-centered care to patients, families, and communities.
- Apply clinical judgment and the nursing process to provide safe, evidence-based care to diverse patients across the lifespan.
- Integrate quality improvement, healthcare informatics, and scholarship activities to enhance patient care within the healthcare system.
- Demonstrate caring and integrity by understanding and upholding ethical and legal principles of the nursing profession.

Development of LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program didactic and clinical courses

The HRSA grant funded the salaries of the EC nursing director, and the faculty members involved in developing the curriculum to deliver the LPN RAP's RSI. This funding also allowed nursing education consultants to attend meetings and review the work. The faculty completed the curriculum, which received approval from the necessary agencies, and the college offered it on schedule in Fall 2023.

PN – Part Time Study		Overview	Credits
Year 1	Quarter 1 Fall	**NURS 115 Nursing Foundations (CD)***	4 cr
		NURS 117 Nursing Foundations Lab/Clinical	4 cr
	Quarter 2 Winter	**NURS 120 Medical/Surgical Nursing I (CD)***	4 cr
		NURS 122 Medical/Surgical Nursing Lab/clinical I	4 cr
	Quarter 3 Spring	**NURS 144 Medical/Surgical Nursing II**	4 cr
		NURS 145 Medical/Surgical Nursing Lab/clinical II	4 cr

Year 2	Quarter 4 Fall	**NURS 148 Family Nursing** **NURS 149 Community** **Lab/Clinical**	3 cr 4 cr
	Quarter 5 Winter	**NURS 153 Mental Health Nursing** **NURS 154 Medical/Surgical Nursing** **Lab/clinical III**	3 cr 4 cr
	Quarter 6 Spring	**NURS 160 Transition to Practice** **NURS 161 Medical Surgical Nursing** **Preceptorship**	3 cr 4 cr
		Total Nursing Credits: 45	

The faculty designed the curriculum to align with the new Washington State Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to Registered Nurse (RN)/Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA). This alignment allows students to progress seamlessly from NAC to LPN and RN/BSN.

Additionally, EC held a Title III grant that provided in-kind support. This grant funded an instructional designer who supplied Canvas templates, professional development for faculty, and content reviews. All courses in the new curriculum have been uploaded into Canvas shells and are ready for other institutions to use.

Practical Nursing Program of Study Beginning Fall 2023 Submission of Substantive Change Requests (SCR) to WABON, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and regional higher education and national nursing accreditation bodies. The EC nursing director and faculty completed SCR documents. In March 2023, EC submitted the SCR concerning modifications to the Practical Nursing (PN) curriculum to several organizations: WABON, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), and the National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (NLN CNEA). All SCRs were approved as submitted.

Creation of Nursing Program Navigator Position

The HRSA grant funded a Nursing Program Navigator position at EC, which the college continued to support through its operating budget. This navigator serves as a student success coach, offering academic advising and case management for students in the nursing program, including apprentices. The navigator is responsible for marketing the program, meeting prospective students, managing the application process, and assisting faculty with admissions for traditional and apprenticeship students. Once students are enrolled in the program, the navigator provides ongoing student support services. The navigator helps students transfer their prerequisite credits to EC, completes academic plans as needed, and is a general college resource for nursing students. In addition to helping faculty identify and address educational and personal life barriers students can encounter in the program, the navigator also assists students in planning for their career and continued education after the program.

First Cohort of Apprentices

EC collaborated with WHCA Apprentice, LLC and LTC industry partners to recruit and admit apprentices. Five students employed at facilities with existing training agent agreements with WHCA Apprentice, LLC were selected for admission. During the admissions process, three additional students expressed interest in participating in the program. They were hired by an LTC facility willing to serve as a training agent and started the quarter as apprentices.

Throughout the program's first year, EC and WHCA Apprentice, LLC developed processes for financial aid and other forms of student support. By the start of the third quarter, four students who were existing employees at

training agent facilities were performing well and progressing in the program. However, one student also employed at a training agent facility dropped out in the second quarter due to personal reasons.

Three apprentices in the pilot program secured new employment with a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) training agent after being accepted into the LTC-LPN RAP. These apprentices were not previously employed by the training agent prior to entering the program.

One apprentice withdrew in the first week, citing an unwillingness to meet the required 21-hour weekly work commitment. The remaining two apprentices completed the first quarter but encountered challenges impacting their standing in the program.

During a regulatory survey at the training site, one apprentice ceased working shifts, putting the facility at risk during the review. That apprentice was also working at a higher-paying facility that was not an approved training site. The training facility subsequently received a citation. The facility experienced a leadership change, though the relationship between the apprentices and the facility was already strained.

By the end of the quarter, one apprentice did not meet the academic requirements and was dismissed from both the apprenticeship and the Practical Nursing (PN) program. The other apprentice was placed on a workplace performance improvement plan, though after continuing to miss work shifts was later removed from the apprenticeship by the program committee due to not meeting OJT standards. This individual chose to continue in the traditional PN program at EC as a non-apprentice student.

Appendix E – WA Department of Veterans Affairs Apprenticeship Development

(Author: WDVA staff)

An ongoing partnership between WDVA and the Workforce Board is facilitating the development of a Washington State (WDVA-specific) LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). The WDVA apprenticeship program is distinct from the WHCA Apprentice, LLC-sponsored LPN RAP with private employers, but draws from the experiences of those efforts.

Since January 2023, the Workforce Board, WABON, and the Department of Labor and Industries (LNI) have contributed to the efforts of WDVA to establish a pilot apprenticeship program in one of their four state veterans' homes. As the agency's largest LTC facility, the Washington State Veterans Home in Port Orchard was selected as the pilot site for the program.

WDVA is also working to develop a new state job classification for their facilities—a nurse technician specific to the WDVA workforce. This classification is a key component in a NAC's6 transition to an LPN and provides the necessary increases to wage and in clinical responsibilities as required by an apprenticeship. WDVA's effort is supported by funding from the Workforce Board as part of the apprenticeship development.

Understanding the extra time and barriers to a state agency sponsored apprenticeship, WDVA is working with the Workforce Board and other state partners to navigate the required apprenticeship standards and WABON credentialing requirements. Barriers such as the interpretation of a 50% tuition waiver, as required by WAC 131-28-026, impact colleges' desire to participate. Colleges are not required to participate in an apprenticeship, as a Related Supplemental Instruction (RSI) provider, and as demand for nursing programs remains high, colleges do not have incentive to participate in apprenticeships where a 50% tuition waiver is required. WDVA has been working to resolve this barrier and working with leadership on interpretation of this WAC for healthcare apprenticeships. Additionally, available LPN programs are geographically limited in Washington and have a shorter completion timeframe than registered nurse (RN) programs, which limits the amount of on-the-job (OJT) hours available, as required for a state registered apprenticeship. WDVA, the Workforce Board, LNI, and WABON have been working to navigate resolution on OJT hours within the program structure. WDVA continues to collaborate with partners to find innovative solutions to apprenticeship development that are in alignment with Washington State employment standards and remains committed to developing an LPN RAP.

While WDVA navigates these challenges, they recognize the immediate need for nurses and have put in place an interim program to ensure they continue to develop new nursing staff. As such, WDVA has launched a pre-nursing sponsorship which will later serve as a pre-apprenticeship as well as an LPN sponsorship at the pilot site.

In July 2024, WDVA launched the Pre-Nursing Education Sponsorship Program (Sponsorship) at Washington Veterans Home. This program covers the cost of tuition, fees, and textbooks for nursing prerequisite courses. Applicants are required to be full-time permanent WDVA NACs outside of their probationary periods and to be in good attendance and disciplinary standing. Work schedule accommodations are available for Sponsorship participants, and a 2.9 GPA must be maintained in all courses to remain eligible. WDVA worked closely with the Workforce Board and educational partners to craft this program.

[6] Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs does not employ Home Care Aides in the four Veteran's Homes.

The Sponsorship serves as the next step in the student's nursing program journey. WDVA partnered with Olympic College to serve as the RSI provider and worked closely with the college and the director of the LPN program to build the Sponsorship. The Sponsorship received a great response, with more applicants than available seats. By Summer 2024, WDVA had three students successfully complete all nursing prerequisites. Due to this program's success, in collaboration with the Workforce Board, as of Winter 2025, WDVA expanded the Sponsorship to all four WDVA LTC facilities across the state, which has added nine new WDVA students to the Sponsorship and has expanded educational partnerships to Clover Park Technical College (CPTC) in Lakewood, Spokane Community College (SCC) in Spokane, and Walla Walla Community College (WWCC) in Walla Walla.

Of the three students that had completed all nursing prerequisite courses, all applied to be in WDVA's first official LPN cohort. The students applied for the WDVA LPN In-Training position with WDVA, and eventually were elevated into a permanent, full-time LPN position. All three were accepted into the program and worked with WDVA's navigator to complete their application packets for the LPN Program at Olympic College to begin their classes in January 2025. With the assistance of the Workforce Board navigators and Olympic College partners, WDVA was able to successfully navigate registration and resource challenges, and all three students are successfully completing coursework while maintaining high GPAs. All WDVA students are on course to graduate in December 2025, and there is already significant demand from employees to open another cohort.

This innovative program is intended to attract and retain talent in LTC professions within Washington while expanding the number of LPNs in skilled nursing facilities. It is also designed to provide a career path in nursing to individuals who might not otherwise have the opportunity based on socioeconomic conditions. Students have the benefit of this unique part-time practical nurse training that is connected to OJT with their employer. Employers provide journey-level LPNs support and one-on-one mentorship. Clinical skills that are being taught academically are being practiced in the work environment with the oversight of preceptors.

Appendix F – State Funding and Directives

The 2021 biennial operating budget, ESSB5092, appropriated $450,000 of the general fund for fiscal year 2022 for the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC, now the Washington State Board of Nursing, or WABON), in collaboration with the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) and the Department of Labor and Industries (LNI), to plan a home care aide to nursing assistant certified to licensed practical nurse (HCA-NAC-LPN) apprenticeship pathway.

> 5092-S.SL.pdf Sec. 1210 (54) on p. 782
> "(54) $450,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 is provided solely for the nursing care quality assurance commission, in collaboration with the workforce training and education coordinating board and the department of labor and industries, to plan a home care aide to nursing assistant certified to licensed practical nurse (HCA-NAC-LPN) apprenticeship pathway. The plan must provide the necessary groundwork for the launch of at least three licensed practical nurse apprenticeship programs in the next phase of work. The plan for the apprenticeship programs must include programs in at least three geographically disparate areas of the state experiencing high levels of long-term care workforce shortages for corresponding health professions and incorporate the participation of local workforce development councils for implementation."

The 2022 supplemental operating budget, ESSB5693, appropriated $1,200,000 of the general fund for fiscal year 2023 to the Workforce Board for apprenticeship grants, in collaboration with NCQAC and LNI, to address long-term care workforce challenges.

> 5693-S.SL.pdf Sec. 611 Subsection 7 on page 751.
> "(7) $1,200,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 is provided solely for apprenticeship grants, in collaboration with the nursing care quality assurance commission and the department of labor and industries, to address the long-term care workforce.

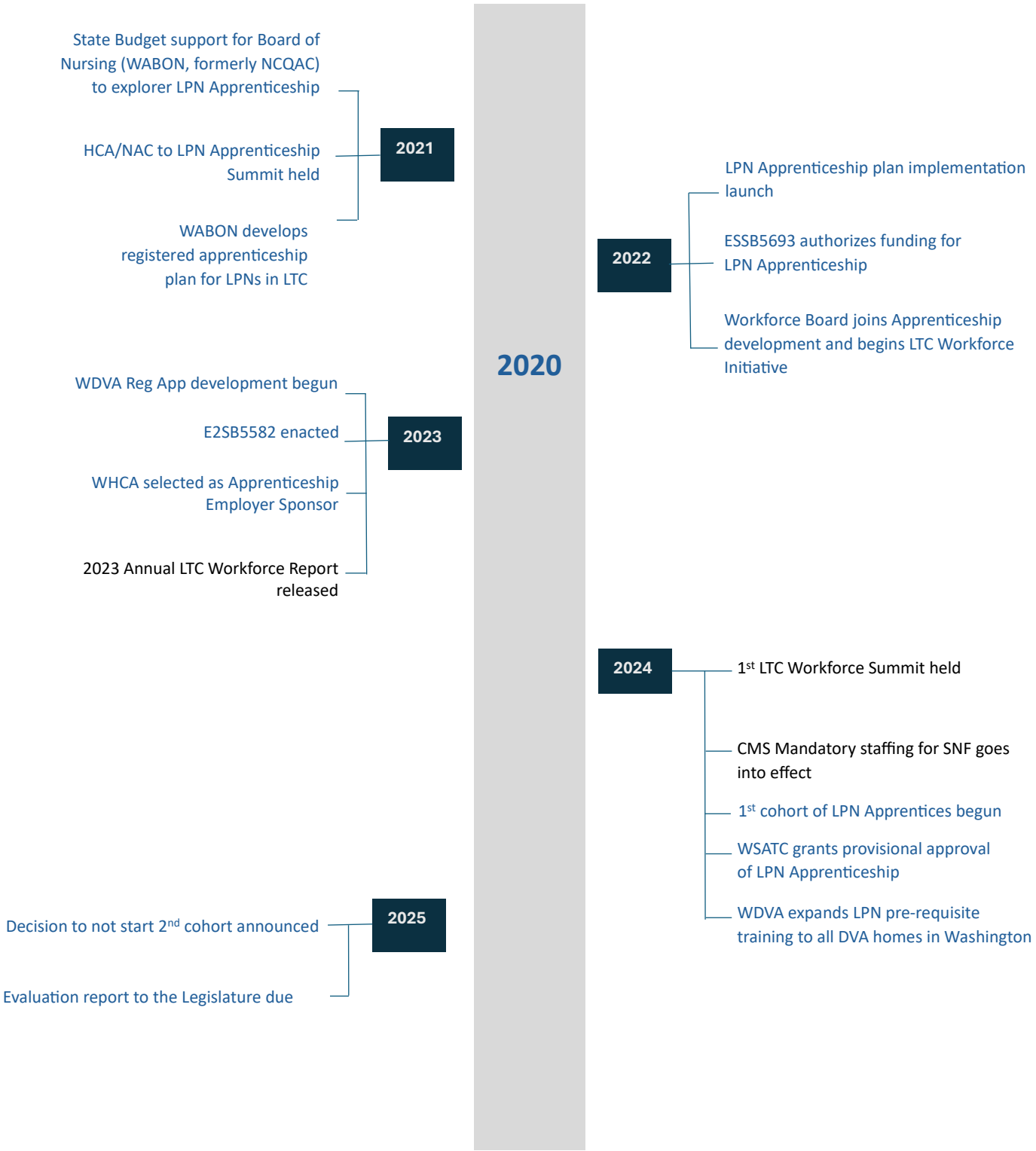
In addition, the Washington Nursing Commission (now the Washington Board of Nursing) received $761,000 to continue to implement virtual nursing assistant training and to create an apprenticeship pathway into nursing for nursing assistants. The proviso also directed to commission to implement rule changes to support this career pathway and to collaboration with the Workforce Board and LNI.

> 5693-S.SL.pdf Sec Subsection 55 on page 427:
> "(55) $761,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 is provided solely for the Washington nursing commission to continue to implement virtual nursing assistant training and testing modalities, create an apprenticeship pathway into nursing for nursing assistants, implement rule changes to support a career path for nursing assistants, and collaborate with the workforce training and educational coordinating board on a pilot project to transform the culture and practice in long term care settings. The goal of these activities is to expand the nursing workforce for long term care settings."

In 2023, the legislature passed E2SSB5582, relating to reducing barriers and expanding education opportunities to increase the supply of nurses in Washington. This legislation included details on the apprenticeship development requirements that aligned with the 2022 budget proviso and required an evaluation of the program, as well as specific charges unrelated to the apprenticeship programs.

Appendix G – Program Timeline

Figure 1: Historical description of HCA/NAC to LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program in Washington



Appendix H – WABON's Early Program Discussion, Planning, and Recruitment

Impetus for an LPN Apprenticeship Pilot
(Author: WABON staff)

Washington has a longstanding commitment to academic progression in nursing. One of the most visible milestones is the Academic Progression in Nursing (APIN) Grant, which led to the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) in 2014. This DTA prepares a student for seamless progression from licensure as a registered nurse (RN) through their education in Washington State Community and Technical Colleges (CTCs) into an RN-to-Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) completion program. Since its approval, almost two-thirds of the CTC-based RN programs have implemented this pathway.

Since 2018, Washington has actively worked to develop additional pathways for seamless progression of NACs and LPNs. The vision for this work has been to build one continuum for all of nursing—from entry into nursing as an NAC to progress within nursing all the way to the doctoral level. The LPN-to-ADN and LPN-to-BSN DTAs were approved in June 2022, minimizing barriers for LPNs seeking to advance in their education and career. LPNs now have choices in terms of Washington-based programs that can provide those pathways. From there, articulation into graduate programs in nursing is well-developed.[7]

The LPN RAP is focused on helping NACs progress to the LPN level and beyond. This scope includes supporting those with no prior education and those with HCA certifications to earn their NA certification, pursue education to become LPNs, and have the DTA options available for additional progression.

The driving force of this work is a deep commitment to supporting greater diversity in nursing through educational and career progression of NACs who serve in critical roles and yet have the fewest resources available to them. While there is relatively little data collection activity on the nursing assistant population, the national demographic data available reveals that NACs are mostly female (89.4%) at nearly a 9-to-1 ratio compared to males and represents much greater racial and ethnic diversity than the US population generally. Although people of color make up just over one-third of the total U.S. workforce, they account for more than half of the nursing assistant workforce. 58.7% of nursing assistants report a race or ethnicity other than white, non-Hispanic (compared to 38.7% in the U.S. generally).[8] Furthermore, 21% of nursing assistants were born outside the U.S. Nationally, less than half of all nursing assistants has completed any formal education beyond high school. 13% of nursing assistants live below the poverty level, 44% live in low-income households, and 36% rely on some form of public assistance.[9]

An equally important, yet often overlooked, component of the LTC workforce in Washington is the HCA worker. These workers represent a significant number of direct care workers, numbering in the tens of thousands. HCAs are supported and represented by either the Washington State Department of Health or the state labor group (SEIU775). These workers are paid the least — often not paid at all — and provide care to family members (children, spouses, parents, etc.), saving the state millions of dollars in institutional care services. The HCA worker is recognized as an entry position for nursing with three programs being offered in high school career programs statewide.

[7] Nursing Career Pathways (2024). Washington State Board of Nursing.
[8] Nursing Assistants (2025). Data USA.
[9] Nursing Assistants (2025). Data USA.

Educational and career progression can change the lives and welfare of our caregiving workforce. Research related to the social determinants of health indicates that education, employment, and income are among factors that account for approximately 40% of the modifiable contributors to a population's health outcomes.[10] The LPN RAP addresses the educational, employment, and income needs of both NACs and HCAs. However, HCAs, to be considered for selection to the LPN RAP, must complete an authorized HCA-to-NAC bridge program making them eligible for employment in a skilled nursing facility or acute care setting.

Project Planning

WABON began developing the HCA-NAC-LPN apprenticeship pathway pilot by hosting a summit in October 2021. WABON invited a diverse range of interested parties, including the Workforce Board, LNI, and other state agency partners, LPN directors, and many LTC representatives. A steering committee was appointed and spent months in discussion. During this time, the committee gained valuable insights into apprenticeship models and worked to clarify differing assumptions across a variety of sectors. There was a focus on developing an understanding of the regulations and standards across state agencies and accrediting bodies. Additionally, the committee worked to identify a pathway that would be effective for pilot participants while upholding the standards of nursing education and nursing practice to ensure public protection.

WABON researched apprenticeship models in other states and discovered a wide range of variations in what is classified as an "apprenticeship." One state used what could be considered an RN residency program. Another state had policies allowing for the development of apprenticeship programs in nursing but lacked a structured framework for implementation. A third state heavily focused on OJT with no pre-requisite requirements.

This research provided clarity and informed the vision for an HCA-NAC-LPN apprenticeship pathway in Washington. The goal was to ensure that LPN graduates from this pilot meet all the same standards for nursing education and practice as other graduates from traditional LPN programs. This proposed pathway needed to provide pilot participants with a professionally recognized and accepted foundation for articulation and seamless progression to RN, BSN, and beyond. This model would also facilitate the portability of licensure across states, which is important for a graduate's professional mobility, especially with Washington's desired adoption of the Nurse Licensure Compact.

With that vision in mind, a focused workgroup began an extensive process to define a model that would support a quality apprenticeship pilot. The workgroup consisted of representatives from WABON, LNI, the Workforce Board, CTCs, and LTC industry. This work resulted in the development and adoption of the Practical Nursing Program-to-ADN DTA/Statewide Major Related Program Agreement (MRPA) and the Practical Nursing Program-to-BSN DTA/MRPA. These pathways now limit LPN pre-requisites to 35 credits and LPN curriculum to a maximum of 45 credits, totaling 80 credits required to earn an LPN certificate and become eligible for licensure. The approval of these DTAs was a significant milestone for this project and occurred early in the planning process.

Identifying a Curriculum

Edmonds College then developed a hybrid curriculum aligned with the new LPN DTAs for their entire program, a development that the workgroup had anticipated would eventually be adopted by the pilot project. The use of HRSA funding to create online resources for the didactic and/or theoretical portion of the practical nursing program greatly benefited the pilot. These new online resources, when combined with in-person skills labs, simulation, and clinical experiences, allowed for an effective hybrid model. The WABON Nursing Program Approval Panel (NPAP) reviewed and approved implementation of this hybrid LPN curriculum. The online

[10] Social Determinants of Health (2025). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

resources were made available as open access resources for other practical nursing programs in Washington, providing a pathway to expand and scale LPN programs. This helps to increase the capacity to reach students in rural areas when combined with strong partnerships and sound plans for completing in-person skills labs, simulation, and clinical experiences.

Finalizing the Pilot Model

Even with the adoption of the streamlined pre-requisite pathway included in the DTAs and the creation of a hybrid LPN curriculum, developing a full pilot registered apprenticeship model remained a challenge. It required in-depth consideration of all entities and sectors involved to understand a variety of regulations and standards and how they intersect with one another. College nursing programs must meet the WABON requirements for nursing education as well as requirements from the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, national accrediting bodies, clinical partners, and their own organizations. LTC partners must meet the requirements within their own organizations as well as LNI requirements for apprenticeship and an array of state and federal requirements from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS). Bringing these two worlds together, along with all their unique needs and requirements, created a multitude of considerations to navigate. Despite several challenges, the workgroup remained deeply committed to the pilot project's success. Through ongoing dialogue, persistent problem-solving, and regular meetings over the course of several months, the workgroup continued to seek out new information and solutions. The resulting product is a pathway that meets necessary requirements, supports students effectively, and upholds the standards of high-quality nursing education that prioritizes public protection.

The Model

The key features of the HCA-NAC-LPN apprenticeship pathway model are as follows:

- **Prerequisite Coursework and Program Acceptance**: Prospective participants must successfully complete pre-requisite coursework and be accepted into an LPN program before becoming eligible for acceptance into the apprenticeship pilot.
- **Admission Standards**: Prospective participants are required to meet the same admission standards as traditional students for the LPN program.
- **"Earn While You Learn"**: Once accepted into both the practical nursing program and the apprenticeship pilot, participants can begin their journey to "earn while they learn." This allows them to gain practical experience and earn a salary while completing their education.
- **Part-Time Model with Financial Support**: The pilot operates on a part-time practical nursing program model and provides financial support for tuition, books, and other needs. This support is intended to help participants maintain a reasonable balance between school and work. During the academic year, participants work part-time and attend school part-time. During summer, when classes are not in session, participants work full-time.
- **Work Role and Progression**: Potential apprentices must be licensed as Nursing Assistants before they can apply to the LPN Apprenticeship Program. Individuals may start as practicing HCA and then transition to licensed NAC via a tailored bridge program. They then begin their initial practical nursing program as NACs. After they successfully complete their first term, which includes a clinical rotation, students in good standing with their nursing education program may apply to WABON to receive their nurse technician credential in the nursing home where they are employed. Nurse technicians work under the direct supervision of an RN in accordance with RCW 18.79.350.
- **Clinical Hours**: While participants in the pilot are allowed to complete a portion of their clinical hours in the nursing home where they are employed, they must still complete additional clinical hours in other clinical settings, just like students in traditional LPN programs. This is critical to meet the requirements of

WACs 246-840-537 (Curriculum for approved nursing education programs) and 246-840-539 (Curriculum for practical nursing education programs). These standards ensure that the graduates of the pathway pilot meet the same standards for nursing education and practice as graduates from traditional LPN programs.

The unique approach to developing an HCA-NAC-LPN apprenticeship model began in 2021 with the potential for significant deviation from other pathways; however, the final model for the apprenticeship pilot is quite traditional. Throughout the process of exploring various concepts and options, it became clear that the existing components of the current nursing education model remain essential and valuable.

Participants in the pilot learn from the same curriculum and have the same expected outcomes as students from traditional LPN programs. Other than built-in financial and navigator support, the main difference for students in the pilot is that a portion of their clinical credit is earned at their place of employment instead of another location. The key is ensuring that the clinical experiences they receive credit for at their place of employment are equivalent to those they would get at any of the other clinical sites available. Like many traditional students, the pilot participants work part-time as nurse technicians for the duration of their nursing education program.

Appendix I – Labor and Industries

In Washington, the LNI is tasked with oversight of registered apprenticeships. The Washington State Apprenticeship & Training Council (WSATC) has authority to review, authorize, and regulate all apprenticeship programs in the state. LNI representatives joined the group developing the LPN RAP to provide insight as program details were established.

The conceptual draft of apprenticeship standards was produced early in the program's development. Later, when the WHCA Apprentice, LLC was selected as the apprenticeship sponsor, they worked closely with LNI and legal counsel to create and finalize the standards using as many concepts as possible from the initial draft. WHCA Apprentice, LLC submitted the standards and obtained provisional registration for the program from WSATC. After approval by WSATC, the program was assigned to an LNI Apprenticeship Consultant.

Appendix J – LPN Apprenticeship Navigators

Role development, training and implementation

An Apprenticeship Navigator is a role focused on supporting individuals interested in or currently participating in apprenticeships. They act as guides, helping with recruitment, information, and support for both potential apprentices and those already in the program as well as their employer partners. Navigators are widely used in a variety of workforce areas, each offering services that are tailored to meet the workforce needs. A key component of this project, contributing much needed support for the NACs and HCAs, was the Workforce Board's two Apprenticeship Navigators. Hired in January 2023, the job duties of the navigators were developed in collaboration with input from the NACs/HCAs and project contributors.

In the short time that the navigators were engaged with the program (funding ended June 30, 2025), they were deeply engaged with recruitment and retention of the pre-requisite students. The navigators developed materials to inform the students about the program and supported the NACs/HCAs in a range of activities. They served as liaisons between the employers and workers and provided reminders about pending deadlines for registration and financial aid. The students turned to the navigators in situations where they required support and/or intervention.

The navigators were also instrumental in soliciting feedback from the students about the program. A series of focus groups facilitated by the Workforce Board staff were conducted to gauge the students' response to the program. The focus groups identified a number of challenges that the students experienced but also provided insight into the appreciation that they felt towards the navigators and the opportunities overall to advance in their career.

Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Apprenticeship Navigator Job Description

Role description:
The apprenticeship navigator provides support for both the apprentice and the employer by facilitating recruitment, enrollment, training, and wrap-around services that support the successful completion of the apprentices' journey and related duties. The navigator will also help the apprentices and employers handle the administrative and reporting aspects of the program with the community college partner and Labor and Industries Apprenticeship Division. These positions will report to the Workforce Board's Long-Term Care Policy Manager.

Responsibilities:

- Support LTC employers in the development of a registered apprenticeship training system for NA-Cs within the existing employer's structure, including support for the development of protocols as identified in the apprenticeship standards with each individual employer to support the identification of potential (pre)apprentices.
    - Work with potential apprentices to prepare them to meet the minimum qualifications for apprenticeship, including enrolling in pre-requisite courses.
    - Identify and support transcription of prior learning credit/assessment where possible.
    - Help verify prior learning, work experience or credentials of potential apprentices.
- Provide ongoing support and resources to potential apprentices.
- Act as liaison between the apprentice, employer, and college.
- Work with employers to facilitate the transition of selected employees into apprenticeship and preceptor roles with minimal disruptions to staffing.

- In consultation with employer partners and colleges, explore opportunities for the following:
    - Joint instructor or co-location of LTC faculty within facilities.
- At the discretion of supervisor, Navigators may be called upon to represent the agency by giving presentations and participating in public meetings.

Qualifications

The successful candidate will demonstrate strong collaboration skills, experience in supporting navigation between systems, the ability to foster positive relationships and work with individuals from diverse backgrounds and be willing to contribute to the success of the LPN registered (pre)apprentices.

Option 1: Four (4) or more years of work experience in one or more of the following areas: long-term care settings, apprenticeship programs, higher education, or project management.

OR

Option 2: A bachelor's degree in public health, a health profession, communication, education, social services, or closely related field.

AND

- Attention to detail, with the ability to multi-task and manage multiple complex projects and processes independently with limited supervision.
- Ability to effectively cope with change, shift gears comfortably and handle risk and uncertainty.
- Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to communicate and work effectively across systems.
- Team player, flexible and able to work with humor and grace under pressure.
- Ability to travel within program region.
- Driver's license.