



WIG - Increasing Wisconsin's Nursing Workforce Program

Grant Recipient: WISCAP

The Workforce Innovation Grant Program is a collaboration between the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). The program provides up to \$10 million in grants to regional organizations to design and implement innovative plans that help solve the workforce challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has caused in their regions. Details on grant winners can be found here: <https://wedc.org/workforce-innovation-grant-recipient/>

WISCAP received a Wisconsin Innovation Grant award in 2022 to address the specific need of providing training and/or reskilling initiatives for in-demand jobs in the nursing profession.

INCREASING WISCONSIN'S NURSING WORKFORCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

As the pandemic dramatically increased healthcare needs, the significant demands on healthcare professionals caused some to take early retirement while many others left the profession. This staffing shortage has caused facilities to reduce their services and limit admissions. This was and is still particularly true at long-term care facilities. The need was so great during the pandemic that the WI Department of Health Services deployed 154 National Guard members to train as CNAs at 17 nursing homes – resulting in the opening of 226 beds.

To address the nursing workforce shortage, this program provides Wisconsin residents with tuition, educational expense, and counseling support to allow them to obtain the training needed to become a CNA, LPN, Medical Assistant, associate degree Nurse, or Registered Nurse.

BUDGET: \$4.8 million

IMPLEMENTATION:

Community Action Agencies have extensive experience in helping individuals to “up-skill” for career employment through successfully running the state-funded Skills Enhancement Program for 10-plus years. Community Action Agencies are uniquely qualified to operate this program for low-income individuals, as they offer a myriad of programs to address the barriers those in poverty face to obtain greater work skills -- like transportation, childcare, book & class fees, and lack of job coaching. WISCAP agencies will work with 142 vulnerable, low-income individuals to enroll them in study/training, cover tuition & other expenses, and provide ongoing coaching to enable completion of study and obtain employment in the healthcare industry.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES:

- WISCAP and ten WISCAP member agencies will increase the healthcare workforce in the State by offering underemployed and unemployed low-income individuals opportunities to receive education/ training in the healthcare field such as CNA, LPN, Medical Assistant, and associate degree Nurse.
- WISCAP member agencies will recruit low-income individuals interested in pursuing a healthcare career, help them identify an area of interest, enroll in a certified healthcare

training/education program, and provide ongoing coaching. The program will also offer support to help the participant overcome barriers common to low-income students i.e., lack of affordable/available childcare, cost of transportation, and cost of required books/materials.

- LeadingAge Wisconsin, the membership organization for long-term care facilities, will provide an opportunity for program participants pursuing a CNA with on-site training at one of LeadingAge's local member facilities. The
- Increasing the healthcare workforce in the state by offering 142 under-employed and unemployed, low-income individuals "up-skilling" into an entry-level healthcare profession through focused education/training and coaching with the result of graduation and immediate employment in the nursing field during the program period.

PROGRAM DATA

As of the last reporting period (March 2023), the program has enrolled 121 students. These students are studying to become CNAs (29%), Medical Assistants (6%), LPNs (13%), and RNs (52%). Participants come from 26 counties training in 15 different educational / training institutions. Currently, 5 participants have graduated and are working in the field with an additional 25 participants expected to complete training and begin working by the end of the summer.