



Registered Nurse

About

Registered Nurses assess patient health problems and needs, develop and implement nursing care plans, and maintain medical records. They administer nursing care to ill, injured, convalescent, or patients with disabilities. Registered Nurses also advise patients on health maintenance and disease prevention or provide case management. Licensing or registration is required to become a Registered Nurse.

Job Outlook and Salary



- Projected regional employment in 2024 is **37,301**
- The statewide projected average annual growth rate over the next five years is **0.57%**
- The average annual wage is **\$97,050** (Seattle MSA)
- Hourly wages range from **\$38.23/HR** (25th percentile) to **\$55.01/HR** (75th percentile)

Job Tasks



- Assess patients' conditions
- Record patients' medical histories and symptoms
- Observe patients and record the observations
- Administer patients' medicines and treatments
- Set up plans for patients' care or contribute information to existing plans
- Consult and collaborate with doctors and other healthcare professionals
- Operate and monitor medical equipment
- Help perform diagnostic tests and analyze the results
- Teach patients and their families how to manage illnesses or injuries
- Explain what to do at home after treatment

Education and Training



- Registered nurses usually take one of three education paths: a **Bachelor's degree in nursing**, an **Associate's degree in nursing**, or a **diploma from an approved nursing program**.

Licensures



- Registered nurses must have a **nursing license** issued by the state in which they work. To become licensed, nurses must graduate from an approved nursing program and pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN).
- In addition, registered nursing positions may require **cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)**, **basic life support (BLS)**, or **advanced cardiac life support (ACLS)** certification.

- Clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) must satisfy additional state licensing requirements, such as earning specialty certifications. Contact state boards of nursing for specific requirements.

Work Schedule



- Nurses who work in hospitals and nursing care facilities usually work in shifts to provide round-the-clock coverage. They may work nights, weekends, and holidays. They may be on call, which means that they are on duty and must be available to work on short notice.
- Nurses who work in offices, schools, and other places that do not provide 24-hour care are more likely to work regular business hours.

Skills



- **Critical-thinking skills.** Registered nurses must assess changes in the health status of patients, such as determining when to take corrective action.
- **Communication skills.** Registered nurses must be able to communicate effectively with patients in order to understand their concerns and evaluate their health conditions. Nurses need to clearly explain instructions, such as how to take medication. They must work in teams with other health professionals and communicate patients' needs.
- **Compassion.** Registered nurses should be caring and empathetic when working with patients.
- **Detail oriented.** Registered nurses must be precise because they must ensure that patients get the correct treatments and medicines at the right time.
- **Emotional stability.** Registered nurses need emotional resilience and the ability to cope with human suffering, emergencies, and other stressors.
- **Organizational skills.** Nurses often work with multiple patients who have a variety of health needs. The ability to coordinate numerous treatment plans and records is critical to ensure that each patient receives appropriate care.
- **Physical stamina.** Nurses should be comfortable performing physical tasks, such as lifting patients. They may be on their feet for most of their shift.

Technology



- **Medical software:** Healthcare common procedure coding system HCPCS; Henry Schein Dentrax; EPIC Systems
- **Word processing software:** Google Docs; Microsoft Word
- **Electronic mail software:** IBM Notes; Microsoft Exchange

Opportunities for Advancement



- Most registered nurses begin as staff nurses in hospitals or community health settings. With experience, good performance, and continuing education, they can move to other settings or be promoted to positions with more responsibility.

- In management, nurses may advance from assistant clinical nurse manager, charge nurse, or head nurse to more senior-level administrative roles, such as **assistant director or director of nursing, vice president of nursing, or chief nursing officer**. Increasingly, management-level nursing positions require a graduate degree in nursing or health services administration. Administrative positions require leadership skills, communication ability, negotiation skills, and good judgment.
- Some nurses move into the business side of healthcare. Their nursing expertise and experience on a healthcare team equip them to manage ambulatory, acute, home-based, and chronic care businesses. Employers—including hospitals, insurance companies, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and managed care organizations—need registered nurses for jobs in health planning and development, marketing, consulting, policy development, and quality assurance.
- Some RNs may become **nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, or nurse practitioners, which, along with clinical nurse specialists, are types of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs)**. APRNs need a master’s degree but many have a doctoral degree. APRNs may provide primary and specialty care, and in many states, they may prescribe medications.

Education and Training Resources

The following regional education and training programs are examples of programs in the region that can help you obtain education and credentials to become a Registered Nurse. Some programs may require additional preparation and completion of prerequisites.



County	Programs
King County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellevue College (https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/) • Highline College (https://highline.edu) • North Seattle College (https://northseattle.edu/) • Renton Technical College (https://https://www.rtc.edu/) • Shoreline Community College (https://shoreline.edu) • University of Washington (https://www.washington.edu/)
Kitsap County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olympic College (https://www.olympic.edu/)
Pierce County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pierce College (https://www.pierce.ctc.edu/) • Tacoma Community College (https://www.tacomacc.edu/) • University of Washington Tacoma (https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/)
Snohomish County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everett Community College (https://www.everettcc.edu/)

Resources to Scholarships and Assistance Programs

- Washington State Opportunity Scholarship: <https://www.waopportunityscholarship.org/about/>
- Washington College Grant: <https://wsac.wa.gov/wcg>

References

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- Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. Retrieved January 25, 2022. *Washington Career Bridge.*
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