

Understanding the Local Labor Market

Promising Career Pathways in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County

Focus: Registered Nurses

April 2004

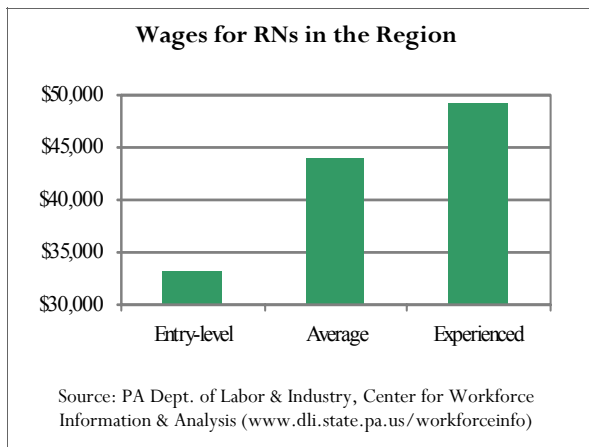
Understanding the Local Labor Market: Promising Career Pathways in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County is intended as a useful resource for career counselors and other professionals responsible for helping jobseekers make informed decisions about employment and training. Featured occupations are selected on the basis of vacancies, wages and benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

What do registered nurses (RNs) do?

- RNs provide care for people who are frail, sick, or injured, and educate individuals about health issues. They document patient symptoms and develop, implement, and evaluate care plans. RNs often serve as a link between patients and other health professionals, including pharmacists, technicians and doctors.

What are RNs' wages, benefits, and work conditions?

- RNs earn \$21 per hour on average locally, according to the Hospital Council of Western PA. Nurses can elect to work full- or part-time and flexible schedules are often available.
- Full-time nurses in hospital and long term care facilities are often required to work some weekends and holidays. Nursing can be physically demanding and emotionally stressful. Many RNs also find the ability to make a difference in others' lives both personally and professionally rewarding, however.



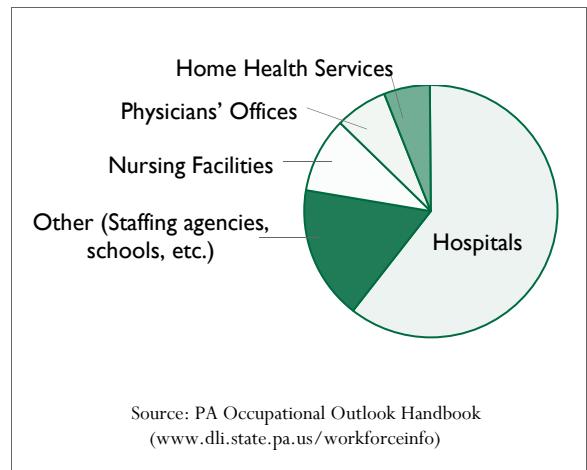
Tell me about related jobs and advancement opportunities.

- If you're interested in nursing, you might also consider other high demand careers such as radiologic technician, sonographer, respiratory therapist, and laboratory technician/technologist.
- RNs can advance to positions such as clinical staff nurse, nurse educator, researcher and nursing administrator. Many opportunities require a bachelor degree. Several programs allow RNs with associate degrees and diplomas to finish a bachelor degree.

How many openings are there for RNs?

- Current demand is very strong. The PA Department of Labor & Industry's Center for Workforce Information & Analysis estimates that there are 11,600 RN jobs in Allegheny County, and that demand will increase more than twice as fast as the average for all occupations.
- Approximately 80% of hospitals are having a hard time filling nursing positions, and vacancy rates are at 7%, according to the Hospital Council of Western PA. Long term care facilities, schools and clinics are also looking for nurses and there is a major shortage of nurse educators, as well. Unemployment among RNs is only 2%, according to the PA Department of Health.
- Experts project that demand will continue to rise due to a combination of an aging nursing workforce and a growing share of the population that is elderly or has chronic ailments. By 2020, a shortage of 40,000+ registered nurses is projected for Pennsylvania.

Where do RNs work?



- **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** has many job postings for RNs with all of these types of employers. The number of posted job openings for nurses and related occupations far exceeds the number of registered job seekers looking for employment. Visit www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us or call 1-866-317-JOBS to find out more.

FOCUS: Registered Nurses

Where can I get training locally?

California University of Pennsylvania — Bachelor degree (BSN); Associate degree. Pennsylvania Resident Tuition: \$2,299/semester; \$192/credit. Phone: (724) 938-5739

Carlow College — Bachelor degree (BSN). Tuition: \$14,776/year; \$452/credit; supplemental tuition for nursing courses. Phone: (412) 578-6109

Community College of Allegheny County — Associate degree. Allegheny County Resident Tuition: \$71.50/credit. Phone: (724) 325-6753

Duquesne University — Bachelor degree (BSN). Tuition: \$17,837/year. Phone: (412) 396-6550

Indiana University of Pennsylvania — Bachelor degree (BSN). PA Resident Tuition: \$2,299/semester; \$192/credit. Phone: (724) 357-2557

La Roche University — Associate degree. Phone (800) 834-4572

Ohio Valley General Hospital School of Nursing — Diploma (22 months). Tuition: \$11,892/Year 1; \$11,519/Year 2. Phone: (412) 777-6207

Mercy Hospital School of Nursing — Diploma (21 months) — Tuition: \$15,549/entire program. Phone: (412) 232-7950

Robert Morris University — Bachelor degree (BSN) — Tuition: \$6,742/semester; \$405/credit; nontraditional student \$376/credit. Phone: (412) 269-3859

Sewickley Valley Hospital School of Nursing — Diploma (22 months). Full-Time Tuition: \$7,350/Year 1; \$7,410/Year 2. Phone: (412) 741-7300

University of Pittsburgh — Bachelor degree (BSN). Pennsylvania Resident Tuition: \$11,084/year; \$375/credit. Phone: (412) 624-4586

UPMC St. Margaret School of Nursing — Diploma (76 weeks). Tuition: \$4,430/first level; \$4,430/second level. Phone: (412) 784-4980

UPMC Shadyside — Diploma (22 months). Full-Time Tuition: \$7,965 (Year 1); \$7,470 (Year 2). Phone: (412) 623-2950

West Penn Allegheny Health System — Diploma. Tuition: \$8,609/Year 1; \$7,038/Year 2. Phone: (412) 578-5538

Note: This information was collected June-August 2003 and is subject to change.

How can I become an RN?

- First, you need to complete an accredited program of study, receiving a diploma from a hospital nursing program or an associate or bachelor degree in nursing. You can typically finish an associate degree or a diploma in under two years.
- Nursing programs require a high school diploma and coursework in chemistry, biology and algebra. Students without this background can make it up in community college.
- Nurses should also be responsible, have strong communication skills, and work effectively with diverse populations.
- To be licensed, you must pass the National Council Licensure Exam for Registered Nurses (CNLEX-RN).
- Entering nurses undergo child abuse, substance abuse, and criminal background checks, as well as medical exams.

Can I get help paying for training?

- **Employers** — Many hospital programs reimburse tuition for students who commit to working for that employer after finishing. Many also pay for current workers such as certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs) to train as RNs.
- **PHEAA** (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency) — Students may have up to 50% of their loans forgiven from a combination of PHEAA and their employer's match through the Nursing Loan Forgiveness Program. PHEAA also administers state and federal financial aid. See www.pheaa.org.
- A limited amount of training funds may be available to eligible individuals through **CareerLink**.

Where do I go for more information?

- Hospital Council of Western PA Center for Health Careers: chc.hcwp.org
- PA Health Careers: www.pahealthcareers.org
- Discover Nursing: www.discovernursing.com
- Health Careers Futures: www.hcfutures.org
- Call **CareerLink** at 1-866-317-JOBS

Remember...

Labor markets are affected by economic, social, and institutional factors that are difficult to predict. No one can forecast perfectly how many jobs will be available, or whether there will be too many or too few workers to fill those jobs. The reality is that employment is never a guarantee, even for individuals who pursue training in demand occupations.

The Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (TRWIB) is charged with promoting a coordinated and accountable employment and training system for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Responsibilities include setting and monitoring local performance standards, chartering CareerLink comprehensive and community centers that provide a range of services to jobseekers and employers, and certifying qualified training providers. Board members are appointed by the Mayor of Pittsburgh and the Chief Executive of Allegheny County.

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Phone: 412-552-7090 | Fax: 412-552-7091 | Internet: www.trwib.org

Chairperson: David J. Malone | Executive Director: Ronald D. Painter | Editor: Amy Erica Smith | Design: Jenny Wolsk Bain
The TRWIB does not warrant that the information in this publication is accurate or complete.

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The entire series may be found on the Internet at www.trwib.org/pcp.htm.

