

Grow Your Own Nurse Practitioner Application Guidelines

2006

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Nurse practitioners (NPs) are an integral part of the Ontario Government's vision for primary health care. The Grow Your Own (GYO) NP initiative was developed to address some of the challenges that communities face in recruiting NPs. This program will allow sponsoring agencies, that currently have a funded NP position that has been vacant for at least one year, the flexibility to use those funds to sponsor a local registered nurse (RN) to pursue his/her Primary Health Care NP education, and subsequently fill the vacant position.

Background

The purpose of this program is to fill existing NP vacancies so that communities can have access to primary health care services closer to home.

At the same time, this is a unique program that addresses a key barrier facing nurses wanting to pursue their Primary Health Care NP education – that is, loss of income during their education.

While this is not meant to be a wide-scale tuition support program for nurses seeking to obtain their NP education, the nurses who participate will benefit by receiving a salary while in school, and having many of their education related costs covered.

Grow Your Own NP

This program requires participation of both sponsoring agencies and nurses. In order to complete the application, sponsoring agencies must identify an eligible RN in advance, one who is interested in obtaining his/her NP certificate and meets the education program's admission requirements. This will require some preparatory time and involve liaison with RNs in your geographic region. **Application to the GYO NP initiative occurs after the RN has been accepted to the Primary Health Care NP education program.**

A return of service agreement is part of the program and this involves shared financial risk between the sponsoring agency and the nurse applicant. This necessitates a positive and functional ongoing relationship between both parties. Sponsoring agencies and nurses are advised to carefully consider their obligations before agreeing to participate. An "at a glance" overview of the program is attached to the end of these guidelines.

The program will begin in time for the September 2006 academic year. Both full time and part time schooling options are available under this initiative as outlined later in this document.

Ideally, the NP student will be able to complete at least one clinical practicum with the sponsoring agency.

Clinical Practicums:

In general, sponsoring agencies that are able to offer NPs a clinical practicum opportunity are encouraged to contact the Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Program Co-ordinator in their region:

<http://np-education.ca/np/index.cfm?main=coordlist.html>

Goals of this initiative:

1. To create new opportunities for communities to recruit NPs.
2. To promote NP retention.
3. To reduce the number of NP vacancies among Ministry funded positions.
4. To increase the supply of NPs employed in the province.

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Who can apply: This application is open to agencies that currently receive funding from the government for an NP position. To be eligible to apply for funding the sponsoring agency must meet the following criteria:

1. NP position must be vacant for a minimum of twelve consecutive months. This excludes any locum less than 8 weeks in length. A locum is defined as when an NP substitutes temporarily for another NP (e.g. to fill vacation time).
2. Sponsoring agency must demonstrate that reasonable recruitment attempts were made to fill the NP position.
3. Sponsoring agency must identify an RN applicant who meets the following eligibility requirements:
 - voluntarily agrees to participate;
 - has been accepted to the NP education program (documented proof required);
 - lives in the community (within 100 km) where the NP position is housed;
 - agrees to the return of service agreement. (*Please see section "Return of Service Agreement".*)

Note: The RN applicant and/or sponsoring agency must not be receiving other sources of Ministry funding for similar purposes, such as the *Nursing Education Initiative* for the same nurse.

4. Applicants to the "part time studies" option, must demonstrate a significant impact/hardship related to the reduction in RN services while the RN attends the NP program. (*Please see the section "Part Time Option" for further details.*)

Eligible Costs Total funding per year varies depending on whether the full or part time studies option is used. In either case, the funds may be used to:

- pay the RN's salary & benefits (proof of current salary – i.e. pay stub, overtime excluded) while s/he attends school
- reimburse tuition costs upon successful completion of the program (original receipts required); and
- reimburse a portion (up to the maximum dollar amount set as per the funding agreement) of other eligible educational expenses (books / custom course ware, accommodations, travel) with original receipts upon successful completion of the program.

Full Time Studies Option Costs: Any sponsoring agency that meets the eligibility criteria may apply for this option. The RN is required to complete the Primary Health Care NP education program on a full time basis in **one** year. Total funding must not exceed \$110,000/year. Only eligible expenses, as identified above, will be considered.

Part Time Studies Option Costs Only sponsoring agencies serving Aboriginal populations and / or those located in underserved communities are eligible for this option. Agencies should contact their Ministry representative to determine if they are eligible for this option.

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The RN must complete the Primary Health Care NP education program **within two years**. Total funding must not exceed \$55,000/year (or \$110,000 over 2 years). Only eligible expenses, as identified above, will be considered.

Note: To be eligible for this option, sponsoring agencies must demonstrate that the reduction in RN services creates gaps in essential care that will be difficult to fill. This option is meant to prevent an immediate loss in local nursing services.

Ineligible Costs: Regardless of whether the full or part time option is used, the following costs are **not eligible** for Ministry reimbursement through this program:

- costs associated with applying to the program
- costs associated with writing the RN(EC) exam
- purchase of IT equipment.

Return of Service (ROS) Agreement: The **full time** studies option requires a 2-year ROS commitment. The **part time** studies option requires a 3-year ROS commitment. In both cases, proof of employment must be confirmed annually (by NP and sponsoring agency) and the ROS commitment is to begin **within 3 months** of registration in the extended class.

The recipient must inform the Ministry within 30 days of changes that impact ROS obligations (i.e. termination of employment). Failure to meet the ROS requirements will result in reconciliation of a portion of the funds as outlined below.

Table 1: Return of Service Reconciliation

Full Time Student	Part Time Student
1-2 years of service, 20% reconciled (10% sponsoring agency, 10% RN)	2-3 years of service, 10% reconciled (5% sponsoring agency, 5% RN)
< 1 year of service, 50% reconciled (25% sponsoring agency, 25% RN)	1-2 years of service, 20% reconciled (10% sponsoring agency, 10% RN)
	<1 year of service, 50% reconciled (25% sponsoring agency, 25% RN)

A draft copy of the ROS agreement is posted on the website.

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing_sec/materials.html

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How to Get Started on Your Application

You may want to print a copy of these guidelines to facilitate completion of the application.

Step One:

Review eligibility criteria carefully. Before proceeding you must determine that you meet the eligibility requirement regarding the length of vacancy, and have identified an eligible RN candidate in your geographic region.

If you would like to participate in the program but require assistance connecting with interested RNs in your community, you can post your contact information on the Nursing Secretariat website. Please visit the site listed in step two for further information.

Step Two:

To access the program application, please go to the following web site:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing_sec/materials.html

Step Three:

Complete the application.

Step Four:

Review your application, please ensure:

- you have completed the correct application (full time or part time option)
- all questions are answered
- all signatures are obtained.

Only complete applications will be considered for funding. Please ensure application is accurate as it will be attached to the funding agreement.

Step Five:

- 1) Keep a photocopy of the application for your records.
- 2) Submit a hard copy application to your appropriate Ministry contact. If you are unsure of the appropriate contact, please consult the letter you received notifying you of this program.

Long-Term Care Homes

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Underserviced Area Program

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Deadline: All applications must be submitted by 4:00 pm EST on June 16, 2006. Late applications will only be considered if an RN is notified of acceptance into the Primary Health Care NP education program after this deadline has passed. Late applicants must submit documentation (e.g. letter/email dated from the school notifying them of admission) in order for the application to be considered.

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Review of Applications: The applications will be reviewed by the Ministry to ensure that all eligibility criteria have been met. Please ensure your applications are complete.

All applicants will be notified of decisions in writing. Every effort will be made to notify successful applicants by August 1, 2006.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified.

Notification: Notification of approval will include a return of service agreement that will outline the terms and conditions of the funding. **The terms and conditions of this agreement are non-negotiable.**

Funding will be flowed to the sponsoring agency when the agreement has been signed by all parties and returned to the Ministry.