

Aspiring Nurses Program – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

General Program Information

What is the Aspiring Nurses Program?

The Aspiring Nurses Program is an enterprise workforce development initiative that supports eligible teammates pursuing a nursing degree (ADN or BSN). The program provides financial assistance, paid education time (PET), and structured career support to help teammates transition into Registered Nurse roles.

Who is eligible for the program?

To qualify, applicants must:

- Be an Advocate Health teammate for at least one year
- Have no disciplinary action in the past 12 months
- Earn \$55,000 or less annually (base pay only)
- Receive a leader recommendation
- Be accepted or enrolled in an accredited ADN or BSN program

How long does the program last?

The program supports teammates for **up to three years**, or until completion of their nursing degree, as long as they remain in good standing.

Do I need to reapply each year?

No. Once accepted, you will remain in the program for up to three years, provided you continue to meet program requirements and remain in good standing.

Can I pursue both an ADN and BSN through this program?

Yes. Teammates may pursue both an ADN and BSN under this program, as long as:

- Both programs are completed within the three-year funding window, and
- The plan is approved by your leader and Workforce Development

Are Accelerated BSN (ABSN) programs eligible?

Yes. Accelerated BSN programs are eligible, as long as they meet all program requirements.

Can I apply if I already have a bachelor's degree in another field?

Yes. You may apply if you are pursuing an ADN or BSN that leads to RN licensure. RN-to-MSN programs are not eligible.

Does the program support online or evening classes?

Yes. Online and evening programs are supported if they are part of an accredited ADN or BSN program.

Can I change schools or programs after being accepted?

Yes, but you must notify Workforce Development. Continued participation and funding are subject to approval and must align with program guidelines.

Is acceptance into the program guaranteed if I meet eligibility?

No. The Aspiring Nurses Program is **highly competitive with limited spots available**. Meeting eligibility requirements does not guarantee selection. Applications are evaluated based on:

- Completeness and attention to detail
- Leader recommendation
- Strength of application responses
- Overall alignment with program goals

Is the program available outside of the Southeast market?

Yes. The program is expanding enterprise-wide and is open to teammates in multiple markets, including Illinois and Wisconsin.

Financial Assistance & Funding

How does funding work in 2026?

All education benefits are managed through **InStride**. Participants must select **one funding pathway** based on their school and eligibility.

What are the available funding pathways?

1. Nursing Preferred Partner (NPP)

- Applies to approved partner schools
- Up to **\$7,500 per year (full-time)**
- Up to **\$3,750 per year (part-time)**
- Typically direct-billed to the school

2. Workforce Development Upskilling (WDU) / Legacy Direct Pay

- Applies to non-preferred schools
- Up to **\$5,250 per year**
- Typically reimbursement-based

What is the difference between Preferred Partner and Workforce Upskilling pathways?

Feature	Preferred Partner (NPP)	Workforce Upskilling (WDU)
School Type	Approved partner schools	Non-partner schools
Funding Amount	Higher annual cap	Standard annual cap
Payment Type	Direct to school	Reimbursement model
Best For	Teammates attending partner programs	Teammates attending other accredited programs

Can I use more than one InStride funding pathway at the same time?

No. Participants may only utilize one InStride funding pathway at a time.

Can I use external funding (grants, scholarships, FAFSA)?

Yes. Participants may use **external funding sources**, including:

- Grants
- Scholarships
- Federal financial aid

However:

- External funding must be coordinated directly with your school
- Advocate Health does not assist with applying for or managing external funding
- Teammates are responsible for ensuring proper coordination of all funding sources

Can I participate in another tuition assistance program at the same time?

No. Participants cannot be enrolled in multiple Advocate Health tuition benefit programs simultaneously.

What costs are covered?

Coverage depends on your selected pathway but may include:

- Tuition
- Books and required fees

Will the program reimburse me for past semesters?

No. The program only covers **future educational expenses after acceptance**.

Will I receive tax documentation?

If applicable, tax documentation (such as 1098) may be issued through your school. For questions, contact your school's financial aid office.

Do I need to pay back the program?

No, as long as you:

- Complete your nursing program
- Maintain program requirements
- Fulfill the required work commitment

Paid Education Time (PET) & Work Expectations

What is Paid Education Time (PET)?

PET allows eligible teammates to receive paid time for school-related activities such as attending class or studying.

- Full-time: Up to **24 hours per week**
- Part-time: Up to **12 hours per week**

(Work minimums must still be maintained.)

Is PET guaranteed?

No. PET is a **benefit and a privilege**, not an entitlement.

- PET must be approved by your leader each semester
- Approval is based on departmental needs and staffing
- PET is not confirmed until leader approval is granted

What should leaders know about PET?

Leaders play a critical role in PET approval and scheduling:

- PET hours are paid from the leader's departmental budget
- Leaders have full discretion in approving PET schedules each semester
- Approval should balance teammate academic needs and department operations
- Early planning and clear communication are strongly encouraged

How do I request PET?

You must submit a **Paid Education Time Request Form** before each semester, including your school schedule. Leader approval is required before use. PET request Form link will be provided at the Program Orientation.

Can PET be changed during the semester?

Yes, but:

- Changes must be submitted in advance
- Leader approval is required
- Last-minute changes are not guaranteed

Can PET be taken during school breaks or holidays?

No. PET is only available during active academic periods.

Can PET be used with overtime?

No. PET cannot be used to reach or exceed overtime. The intent is to reduce work hours—not increase total compensation.

How is PET tracked?

Tracking methods may vary by department but may include:

- Scheduling systems (Shift Select, etc.)
- Timecard coding (Clinical Education or CE)
- Shared team schedules

Leaders must maintain visibility and alignment with academic schedules.

Employment Commitment & Program Policies

What is the work commitment after graduation?

Participants must work as an RN with Advocate Health for four years after licensure.

Is the work commitment prorated based on how much funding I use?

No. Any use of program benefits requires fulfillment of the full four-year commitment.

What happens if I leave before completing my commitment?

You may be required to repay a portion or all of the funds received.

Can I transfer within Advocate Health during my commitment?

Possibly, but all transitions must be coordinated and approved in advance.

Will my RN pay be reduced because I participated in this program?

No. RN compensation follows standard pay practices and is not impacted by participation.

Will I still receive benefits while in the program?

Yes. Benefits remain intact as long as you maintain your employment status and required work hours.

Academic & Program Expectations

What happens if I withdraw from a class or program?

You must notify Workforce Development immediately. Changes may impact:

- Funding eligibility
- PET eligibility
- Program standing

Can I take a break from school?

Yes, but you must receive **prior approval**. Unapproved breaks may result in removal from the program. Please keep in mind that the program only offers support for up to 3 years so taking a break could forfeit part of your allotment.

What happens if I fail the NCLEX?

Participants are typically given an additional attempt. Continued eligibility is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Application Process

When does the application open?

- Application window: **May 1 – May 15, 2026**
- Notifications: Early June

Is attending an information session required?

Yes. Attendance at an official information session is **required to be considered for the program**.

What documents are required?

- Proof of acceptance/enrollment
- Leader recommendation
- Completed application with all required responses

What happens if my application is incomplete?

Incomplete applications will **not be reviewed**. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all materials are submitted on time.

Job Placement & Career Transition

Will I be placed into an RN role after graduation?

The organization provides support through Talent Acquisition, but:

- You must apply for RN roles
- You are expected to accept a position when offered

Do I need to apply for a residency program?

Yes. Participants are expected to apply to the New Graduate RN Residency Program approximately six months before graduation.

What if I cannot find a position?

Talent Acquisition will assist, but you are expected to accept a role when one becomes available.



Still Have Questions?

For additional support, please contact:

 **Workforce Development Team** at ah-aspiringnurses@aah.org

 **HR Service Center** at 704-631-1500