

**Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Nursing Secretariat
Underserviced Area Program**

Nursing Community Assessment Visit Program

BACKGROUND

On May 3, 2006, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced HealthForceOntario: an innovative, collaborative multi-year plan to give Ontario the right number and mix of health care providers, working in communities across the province to meet our health needs now and in the future. This plan includes a variety of initiatives designed to help Ontario identify its health human resource needs, develop new provider roles to meet our changing health needs, work closely with the education system to develop people with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes, and compete effectively for health care professionals.

A Nursing Community Assessment Visit Program has been created as part of the HealthForceOntario strategy.

OBJECTIVE

The Nursing Community Assessment Visit Program will help to support the distribution of nursing professionals working in underserviced and rural communities across the province.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Nursing Community Assessment Visit Program will provide reimbursement to employers for travel and accommodation expenses incurred by nurses (and their spouses if applicable) for the purpose of assessing nursing employment opportunities in communities with a Rurality Index of Ontario (RIO) score of 40 or over*.

** Please note that the RIO scores are reviewed periodically and this may have implications for the administration of the program in future years.*

This program is available to all practicing nurses in Ontario including Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses and Nurse Practitioners interested in relocating to a community with a RIO score of 40 or greater.

The program is also available to Ontario nursing graduates under the Nursing Graduate Guarantee initiative and Ontario nursing students (RN and RPN) in the last year of their respective programs.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to participate in this program, the organization must have a permanent nursing position available for the nurse that is funded by the MOHLTC.

The employer will invite the nurse for the community assessment visit. The employer will then contact the Underserved Area Program (UAP) of the MOHLTC to receive written approval prior to the visit taking place as per the program guidelines to ensure that travel and accommodation costs for the nurse (and spouse if applicable) will be reimbursed. The employer will then submit a claim for reimbursement of eligible expenses to the UAP.

The nurse must have a valid nursing registration with the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) to practice or Temporary Registration with the CNO if they are a recent nursing graduate. A nursing student must show evidence in writing that he/she is eligible to obtain a certificate of registration, within one year of the visit date, subject to the rules and regulations of the CNO.

PROCEDURE

1. The nurse applies for or contacts an employer regarding permanent nursing position(s) in a community with a Rurality Index of Ontario (RIO) score of 40 or greater)* *.

*****Note: To find out if a community is eligible, please contact the UAP.***

2. The employer must invite the nurse for a community assessment visit and must have a permanent nursing position available for the nurse that is funded by the MOHLTC.
3. The employers will contact UAP for written approval prior to the visit to ensure that the costs for travel and accommodation for the nurse (and spouse if applicable) to assess practice opportunities will be reimbursed as per the program guidelines.
4. Nurses are encouraged to arrange several interviews during the same trip. The number of nights of hotel accommodation reimbursement (cost of hotel or motel - single occupancy costs if the nurse travels alone or double occupancy costs if spouse accompanies) will be based on the number of interviews and distance between communities (for only 1 interview, a 3 day maximum will apply). A second trip to the same area(s) will not be approved.
5. The nurse is responsible for arranging his/her own appointments, travel and accommodation for the community assessment visit.
6. The nurse submits original receipts to the employer.
7. The employer reimburses the nurse for the visit.

8. The employer submits appropriate receipts along with the government expense claim form to the UAP for reimbursement of eligible expenses.

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/uap/forms_mn.html

9. UAP will review the claim and reimburse the employer for eligible expenses. Please note that this process may take up to 6 weeks.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Reimbursement to the employer by the Ministry for site visits will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Eligible travel and accommodation will be reimbursed as follows:

- Travel Reimbursement for the nurse (and spouse if applicable) will be calculated on the least possible expensive mode of travel (economy airfare, or where possible, use of a personal vehicle or car rental). The kilometre rate reimbursed for use of a personal vehicle is 41¢/km.
- Justifiably required accommodations for the nurse (and spouse if applicable) to attend scheduled interviews (cost of hotel or motel - single occupancy costs if the nurse travels alone or double occupancy costs if spouse accompanies) will be reimbursed.
- In the event that a car rental is required for travel within the community and to attend the interview, reimbursement for an economy size vehicle only will be accepted.
- Private stays with family, friends or colleagues are encouraged. A maximum of \$30.00 per night for gratuitous lodging expenses is allowed. No receipt is required in this case.
- Claims for reimbursement must be submitted to the employer as soon as possible after the travel has taken place. The employer must submit claims to UAP within 90 days of the date of travel to be eligible for reimbursement. Claims received after 90 days will not be paid.

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/uap/forms_mn.html

NOT COVERED

Travel to Ontario from other provinces or countries, meals, personal long distance telephone calls, relocation costs and expenses for children will not be reimbursed.

For more information, please contact:

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Underserviced Area Program
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Nursing Community Assessment Visit Program Questions and Answers for Nurses

Can I receive reimbursement for travel and accommodation costs to visit an eligible community in Ontario to assess practice opportunities?

Yes, you can receive financial assistance if you apply to an eligible community with a permanent nursing position funded by the MOHLTC. You must receive prior approval from the organization to assess practice opportunities and meet with the recruitment officials before traveling to the eligible community.

Which communities can I travel to?

Any community or facility in a community with a RIO score of 40 or greater* is eligible. If possible, you are encouraged to visit more than one designated community during each trip, or assessment visit.

** Please note that the RIO scores are reviewed periodically and this may have implications for the administration of the program in future years.*

How many trips can I be reimbursed for through the Community Assessment Visit Program for Nurses?

Funds will be provided for a return trip from the applicant's place of residence in Ontario. A second trip to the same area(s) will not be approved or funded.

Which expenses are covered under this program?

Travel costs from the applicant's place of residence in Ontario. Travel costs from one community to another for the purpose of attending meetings and touring facilities are also covered, should an applicant receive approval for visiting several communities in one trip. Travel expenses are calculated on the least possible expensive mode of travel (economy airfare, or use of a personal vehicle or car rental). Expenses incurred for the nurse's accommodations (single occupancy costs if the nurse travels alone or double occupancy costs if spouse accompanies) are covered.

Will my spouse's travel expenses be covered?

Yes, this program will cover travel costs for a spouse.

Which expenses are not covered under this program?

Travel to Ontario from other provinces or countries, meals, personal long distance telephone calls, relocation costs and expenses for children are not covered.

How can I receive reimbursement for travel and accommodation costs through the Nursing Community Assessment Visit Program ?

1. Contact the UAP to find out if a community is eligible, i.e. has a Rurality Index of Ontario (RIO) score of 40 or greater.
2. Contact organizations/community contacts and set up meetings and interviews.
3. Employer must receive written approval from UAP before you can travel.
4. For reimbursement, original receipts must be provided to the organization. Copies of credit card vouchers are not acceptable receipts. Airfare is based on economy class. The receipt is the last page(s) of the airline ticket or a copy of the e-ticket.
5. The organization will reimburse the nurse directly.
6. Claims for reimbursement from organizations must be received by UAP within 90 days of completing the trip. Claims received after 90 days will not be paid.

Can I use my own vehicle to travel?

If approved, the use of a personal vehicle within Ontario is allowed. Only travel costs within Ontario are covered. The kilometre rate for use of a personal vehicle is 41¢/km.

Can I use this program to assess a community that I am considering for a clinical placement?

No. The Nursing Community Assessment Visit Program is for nursing professionals and nursing students in the last year of their program who are considering permanent relocations to eligible communities in Ontario, and is not meant to be used for the purpose of assessing a clinical placement.