

Grow Your Own Nurse Practitioner Application Guidelines

2008

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 Grow Your Own NP program was announced by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care in February 2006. 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 the 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.

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.

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Who can apply: This application is open to agencies that currently receive targeted funding from the Ontario 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, or is already enrolled, in 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".*)
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", page 4, for further details.*)

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*, or the *Tuition Support Program* for the same nurse.

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, or a portion thereof subject to level of coursework and budget availability, (proof of current salary, i.e., pay stub, required; all overtime is excluded) while s/he attends school
- nurses enrolled in the program on a part-time basis will be paid, subject to budget availability, on a pro-rated basis as follows:
 - 3 courses – 75% of salary
 - 2 courses – 50% of salary
 - 1 course – 25% of salary
- students in the *Ontario Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Program* are eligible for FT salary reimbursement during the 13 week FT clinical practicum period.
- 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

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(books / custom course ware required for the program, accommodations, travel) with original receipts upon successful completion of the program.

Requests to reimburse the costs of books, custom course-ware, etc must be accompanied by documentation from the university that these are program requirements (i.e., book lists, etc).

Requests for mileage reimbursement must be within current Ministry guidelines. At time of printing, these were:

Kilometres Driven	Southern Ontario	Northern Ontario
0-4000	\$0.40/km	\$0.41/km
4001-10700	\$0.35/km	\$0.36/km
10701-24000	\$0.29/km	\$0.30/km
More than 24000	\$0.24/km	\$0.25/km

Please confirm current guidelines with the Ministry.

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 \$116,650/year. Only eligible expenses, as identified above, will be considered.

Note: Any nurse already enrolled in an NP education program, may qualify to participate, but only for one year (i.e., must be due to complete the education program within the year).

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.

The RN must complete the Primary Health Care NP education program **within two years**. Total funding must not exceed \$58,325/year (or \$116,650 over 2 years). Only eligible expenses, as identified above, will be considered.

Note: To be eligible for this option:

- 1) 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.)**
- 2) a part-time studies option must be available through the chosen university**

Ineligible Costs:

The following costs are **not eligible** for Ministry reimbursement through this program:

- costs associated with applying to the program
- education not directly associated with the NP education program

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- (e.g., continuing education, unrelated courses, etc)
- supplies (i.e., stethoscopes, otoscopes, etc)
- meals
- purchase of any materials (e.g., books, etc) that are not required by the NP education program
- costs associated with writing the extended class registration exam (ECRE)
- purchase of any IT equipment.

Return of Service (ROS) Agreement:

The **full time** studies option, or those cases where the agency is sponsoring RNs already enrolled in the program, requires a 2-year ROS commitment. The **part time** studies option requires a 3-year ROS commitment.

In all cases:

- 1) Proof of employment must be confirmed annually (by NP and sponsoring agency)
- 2) The ROS commitment is to begin **within 3 months** of registration in the extended class
- 3) The ROS commitment must be full-time
- 4) The ROS must be completed within 5 years.

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)

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

Completing Your 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.

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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
- all necessary receipts are attached (e.g. tuition, books, etc.).

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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Prenatal and Postnatal Nurse Practitioner Services

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Community Health Centres

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Interdisciplinary Practitioner Program

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Underserviced Area Program

Primary Health Care Team
Underserviced Area Program
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Aboriginal Healing & Wellness Strategy

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***Application
Review:***

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. Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified.

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.