



How to Develop a Facility-Based Nurse Aide Training Program

This document is designed to be a general “how to” process for initiating a facility or provider-based nurse aide training program. This is not an all-inclusive document. As such, it is important to be aware that your state may have additional requirements to establish and run a nurse aide training program. In this document, you will find information to help you locate your state agency that oversees the nurse aide training and competency evaluation program (NATCEP).

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Where do I start?

Understand Program Approaches & Requirements:

- Research your state requirements and application approval process for:
 - Nurse aide training programs
 - Nurse aide instructor
 - Know where to access both state and [federal training requirements](#) for approval of training programs, as well as qualifications and training for the program instructor.
- Research your state testing process for nurse aide training programs and ensure that you understand the process and the requirements to test.
 - Identify if a third party conducts the final state test for nurse aide competency and evaluation testing process. In some states, providers can apply to become testing sites.

- Identify who establishes the list of questions for the final state nurse aide competency and evaluation testing process.
 - If a third party conducts the final state test and competency examinations, what program manual are they developing the pool of questions and skills from?
 - For consideration, if the third party uses a specific manual should your program use the same manual to increase student exam success.
- Where will the state competency and evaluation testing process happen? Is it within a reasonable proximity to your location?
- Talk to at least 3 established programs that have successful student pass rates, if possible, to identify potential hurdles, obstacles, successes, and organizational impact of starting a facility-based nurse aide training program. If you are not aware of established programs, reach out to your state association.

My facility can meet the requirements, now what?

Design Your Training Program & Secure an Instructor:

- Based on your research and capabilities, design your training program including instructor, licensing requirement and recruitment, training delivery, and testing.
 - Consider creating an instructor orientation program to ensure all instructors at the facility teach the same skill steps as the state test.
 - Federal application to become a nurse aide training site asks for the Registered Nurse Program Coordinator (PC), primary instructors (PI), and supplemental instructors (SI) to be identified.
 - Consider and create a plan for how each of these roles will be covered if the person designated is unavailable.
 - Decide how the supervised practical training will work, any supplemental information that will be used, and procedures that will be used to provide security and validations of examinations during the class.
- Identify, per state requirements, dedicated space for classroom and for lab/clinical set up.
- Select textbooks that are up-to-date and approved by your state agency. Not all nurse aide training program textbooks are approved by every state.
 - Potential resource for nurse aide training textbook: AHCA's [How to be a Nurse Assistant 7th edition](#)
- Ensure you have adequate training supplies, (e.g., textbooks, appropriate size room to meet the needs of students, mannequin, clinical supplies such as stethoscope with double head for teaching, vital sign equipment, linens, toiletries, bathroom, bedpan, bed, etc.).
- Ensure you have a documentation retention plan in place for any state agency audits that may occur.

Apply for Training Approval:

- Complete any applications and/or training requirements for new nurse aide instructor(s) according to state requirements (e.g., train-the-trainer instruction).
- Complete the application process identified in your state for starting a nurse aide training program and submit any additional information required by the state agency overseeing the nurse aide training program.
- Await approval of your application with revisions as needed and requested by the state agency before you begin your first nurse aide training class.

Tips for a Successful Nurse Aide Training Program

- Ensure you have all the appropriate program application approvals and instructor approvals before you begin your nurse aide training program.
- Identify the state's maximum number of instructor(s) to student ratio.
- Identify the nurse aide training program dates class schedule considering that students may be parents, going to school, or have other responsibilities that makes attending the typical 9am-5pm class not conducive to meet their needs. Consider evenings, weekends, and shortened hours to meet the needs of attendees.
- Recruit new students through marketing of your upcoming class. How do they enroll, who do they notify for questions, what are the class dates and times, and what are the expectations of the class and their participation in the class?
 - Ensure students receive information about [entitlement to training reimbursement \(42 CFR 483.152 \(c\)\)](#) upon employment as nurse aide. Nurse aide training and test cost reimbursement information can be found in the states Medicaid Provider Manual.
 - Consider the transportation needs of potential nurse aide training students. If your location could create access challenges for candidates in your community, consider what options are available to your facility to provide transportation, public transit vouchers, etc., to increase access to your program.
 - If standard marketing for the training program does not exist, consider using free marketing development resources such as Canva or similar software programs.
- Prepare a policy for make-up days for students who may miss time. Training dates and times may need to be reported to the state prior to the start of the class.
- Once the class begins, keep attendance records for each class. Keep documentation of each unit or chapter that you cover, and the date reviewed. Keep documentation of each skill that each student completes. Ensure that state specified hours of training and [federal requirements for core competency](#) has occurred before the student has any contact or provides any care to residents. It is important to follow any state specific requirements for this process.
- After class completion, submit any required course completion documentation to the state agency as indicated by your state requirements.
- Once class has finished, help students identify how to complete the registration process for the state approved nurse aide competency and evaluation.

- Ensure that students do not work in the facility longer than 4 months without becoming a certified (or registered) nurse aide according to [federal requirements](#) from date of nurse aide application.
- For training program consideration:
 - Are there examples of class schedules detailing what chapters and/or skills to teach and on what day?
 - Are there state approved videos demonstrating skills?
 - What opportunities exist to connect with an active instructor to observe them teaching, ask questions, etc.?
 - What guidance exists on attracting students when in a rural area?
 - What guidance exists on working with students with disabilities or English as a second language (ESL)?
 - Research local resources for ESL students.
- For consideration of program audits:
 - What does a nurse aide training program audit look like in your state?
 - Are there examples of what the state auditor will look for when they come into the building to audit the classes?

What are different models of facility-based nurse aide training programs?

- Independent training program site approved by state agency to be a facility-based provider nurse aide training program.
- Partner with:
 - Local community and technical colleges to provide nurse aide training to offer clinical site rotations for the nurse aide classes hosted by the community and technical colleges.
 - Local high schools and trade schools who are already engaged in the nurse aide training program.
- [CNAOnline.com](#) is a hybrid training course that blends the traditional classroom educational materials into an online learning platform and has in-person locations for the skills competency and demonstration component. The hybrid course has instructors available to assist students in answering questions that arise throughout the course. Students have 24/7 online access to AHCA's nationally acclaimed "*How to Be a Nurse Assistant*" curriculum. An RN is provided by CNAOnline.com that is a qualified online instructor to work with students throughout the course.
- Earn to Learn program which is based on an employment first program design in which participants are first hired by the employer and are then trained under an in-house training program or through a third-party provider under an arrangement coordinated by the employer. This allows the participant to get paid while learning the educational requirements of their role. The program is designed to pay for the free (to participants) training and testing and may offer cash bonuses for participants. The program seeks to:

- encourage new workers to enter the field of caregiving by lowering the costs of becoming a CNA and by making training more readily available.
- program funding is only used on participants who are committed to working in long-term care; they are hireable and can pass the needed background checks of the job before any program dollars are spent.
- offer an “earn while you learn” advantage which eliminates a significant financial barrier to entering the profession.

In addition to this earn to learn program, there are opportunities for a mentorship program to help employers start up or continue a mentorship program to help increase the retention rates of new CNAs that they mentor who achieve at least a 6-month retention, and also provides an opportunity for professional growth for experienced CNAs who serve as mentors.

- Apprenticeship program engaging a local CNA school, the Department of Labor, and your long-term care facility.
 - Find a local CNA school that you like and express interest in a partnership.
 - Go with the CNA school to the local Department of Labor office in your state and indicate that you are partnering with the CNA school and would like to create an apprenticeship program for CNAs based on the national apprenticeship model.
 - Build educational relationships with local universities and colleges to foster growth and engagement in the apprenticeship program.
 - Submit for federal workforce grants to help fund the apprenticeship program.

How do I find the state agency that oversees the nurse aide training and competency program in my state?

- National Council of State Boards of Nursing has a [webpage](#) dedicated to state nurse aide registries.
 - [Director of Nurse Aide Registries](#)
- [National Nurse Aide Assessment Program](#) (NNAAP) – is used by 17 jurisdictions to determine nurse aide competency. The 17 jurisdictions include: Alabama, Alaska, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Georgia, Guam, Mariana Islands, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia, Virgin Islands, and Washington.

How can I engage temporary nurse aides (TNAs) in my facility-based CNA training program?

- Check to see if your state has a pathway to transition TNAs to CNAs and utilize your CNA training program accordingly.
- [Test prep course](#) - This 30-hour AHCA/NCAL course prepares TNAs/PCAs for becoming CNAs in states that allow challenges to the certification/licensing test or that offer accelerated training pathways. This program is an excellent refresher study guide for students experiencing significant delays in testing.

What should I do if my facility currently has a Nurse Aide Training Program (NATCEP) ban?

- Research your state's requirements for nurse aide training programs to determine if you can meet them. For background on regulation requirements to request waiver or appeal the ban, see this [CMS memo](#).
- Submit any state required documentation for the waiver request including identification of the need for nurse aide training program in your facility, citing distance to nearest training program, capacity/availability issues with nurse aide training, evidence that your facility has corrected the deficiency that led to NATCEP ban, detailed plans/partnerships to train in your facility but not by your facility, including a third-party program that has agreed to partner with your facility, and any other examples of why your facility should be granted a waiver request to allow provision of nurse aide training in your facility.
 - AHCA has prepared a template and a tip sheet to assist with a waiver request: [NATCEP Ban Waiver Tip Sheet](#) and [Nurse Aide Training and Competency Evaluation Program Ban Waiver Request](#) form
- Be prepared for interview process from state agency and have information you obtained from your research ready to provide support for your waiver request.
 - Provide any additional information that is requested from the state agency.
 - If waiver request is based on a CMP amount imposed greater than threshold (\$11,995 as of 2022- as adjusted by 45 CFR 102) and CMP is not related to the quality of care furnished to residents, the waiver will be submitted to the state agency and then forwarded to the CMS location for approval.
 - If your state has existing policies/procedures for a waiver request, follow those practices.
- Await determination of waiver approval, or denial, before proceeding with nurse aide training process.

