

NURSING ASSISTANT INITIATIVE

MONITORING REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2022

American Rescue Plan | E603220

September 14, 2022

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Administrative Summary

Fiscal Year: 2022

Grant Agreement Number: 205478

Grant Agreement Amount: \$3,168,809

Grantee: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Office

Address: 30 East 7th Street, St. Paul, MN 55101

Program Website: <http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/CNATraining/>

Grantee Representative: Valerie DeFor, Executive Director at Minnesota State HealthForce Center of Excellence

Grantee Authorized Representative: Larry Lundblad, Executive Director of Workforce and Economic Development at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

In-Person Monitoring Review Date
June 15, 2022

Grantee Staff Present at Monitoring Review

Valerie DeFor, Executive Director at Minnesota State HealthForce Center of Excellence

Suzanne Ciebiera, Continuing Education & Workforce Development at Minneapolis Community and Technical College

Kim Dreshsel, Nursing Instructor at Minneapolis Community and Technical College

State of Minnesota Staff Present at Monitoring Review

Jacquelynn Mol Sletten, Financial Aid Administrator at Minnesota Office of Higher Education

Tara Winchester, Program Administrator at Minnesota Office of Higher Education

Virtual Monitoring Review Date
June 22, 2022

Grantee Staff Present at Monitoring Review

Valerie DeFor, Executive Director at Minnesota State HealthForce Center of Excellence

Vessie Jones, Program Coordinator at Prime Time Medical Training

State of Minnesota Staff Present at Monitoring Review

Jacquelynn Mol Sletten, Financial Aid Administrator at Minnesota Office of Higher Education

Training Providers

The grantee partnered with the following training providers to provide participants with classes, uniforms, exams, and other supports at no cost to participants.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

- Alexandria Technical and Community College, Alexandria, MN
- Anoka Technical College, Anoka, MN
- Central Lakes College, Brainerd, MN
 - » Central Lakes College, Staples, MN
- Century College, White Bear Lake, MN
- Dakota County Technical College, Rosemount, MN
- Hennepin Technical College, Eden Prairie, MN
- Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Minneapolis, MN
- Minnesota North College, Grand Rapids, MN
 - » Minnesota North College, Hibbing, MN
 - » Minnesota North College, Virginia, MN
- Minnesota State College Southeast, Red Wing, MN
 - » Minnesota State College Southeast, Winona, MN
- Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Moorhead, MN
 - » Minnesota State Community and Technical College, St. Paul, MN
 - » Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Wadena, MN



- Minnesota State University Mankato, Mankato, MN
- Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Granite Falls, MN
 - » Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Worthington, MN
- Northland Community and Technical College, East Grand Forks, MN
- Pine Technical and Community College, Pine City, MN
- Ridgewater College, Hutchinson, MN
 - » Ridgewater College, Willmar, MN
- Riverland Community College, Albert Lea, MN
 - » Riverland Community College, Austin, MN
 - » Riverland Community College, Owatonna, MN
- Rochester Community and Technical College, Rochester, MN
- Saint Paul College, St. Paul, MN
- South Central College, Mankato, MN
- St. Cloud Technical Community College, St. Cloud, MN



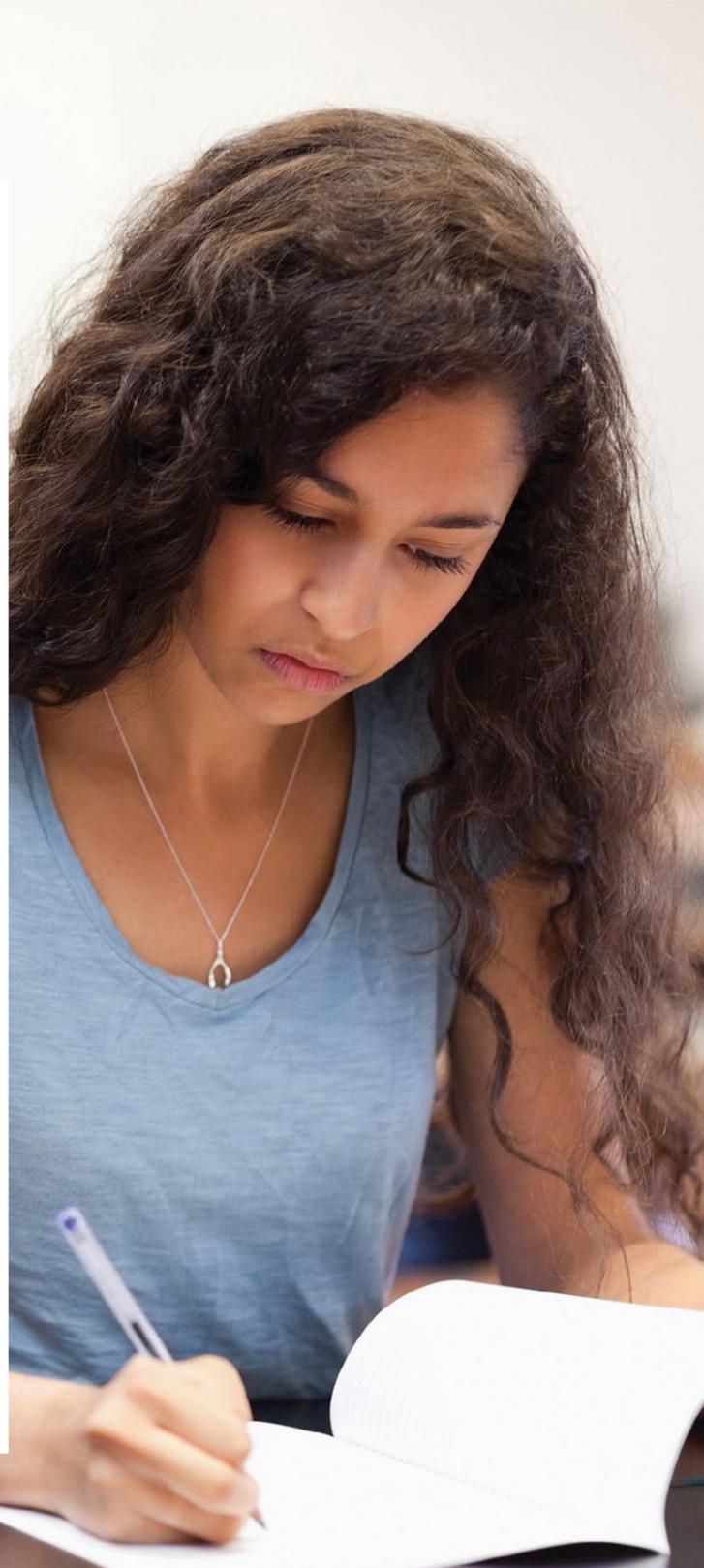
Private Companies

- ✓ HeartCert, Duluth, MN
 - HeartCert, Eagan, MN
 - HeartCert, Mankato, MN
- ✓ LeadingAge Minnesota
 - Auburn Homes and Services
 - » Chaska, MN
 - » Waconia, MN
 - Benedictine
 - » Hastings, MN
 - » Minneapolis, MN
 - » New Brighton, MN
 - » Shakopee, MN
 - » St. Paul, MN
 - » St. Peter, MN
 - » White Bear Lake, MN
- Cassia, Edina, MN
- Central Healthcare, Le Center, MN
- Ebenezer
 - » Bloomington, MN
 - » Burnsville, MN
 - » Edina, MN
 - » Minneapolis, MN
- Episcopal Homes, St. Paul, MN
- Gunderson Tweeten Care Center, Spring Grove, MN
- Life Care, Roseau, MN
- Mille Lacs Health System, Onamia, MN
- Viking Manor, Ulen, MN
- ✓ Prime Time Medical Training, Minneapolis, MN
- ✓ Ronda Fay Rohl, Waltham, MN
- ✓ Villa of St Vincent, Crookston, MN

The grantee partnered with the following high school program locations to provide participants with exams at no cost to participants.

Minnesota High School Programs

- 916 Career and Technical Center, St. Paul, MN
- Alexandria High School, Alexandria, MN
- Anoka-Hennepin STEP, Anoka, MN
- Browerville High School, Browerville, MN
- Elk River High School, Elk River, MN
- Forest Lake High School, Forest Lake, MN
- Isle School District, Isle, MN
- Mankato West High School, Mankato, MN
- Marshall Area Technical and Educational Center, Marshall, MN
- Minnesota North College (Mesabi Range College), Virginia, MN
- Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Granite Falls, MN
- Nevis High School, Nevis, MN
- Roseau High School, Roseau, MN
- Rosemount High School, Rosemount, MN
- Rushford Peterson High School, Rushford, MN
- Spring Lake Park High School, Spring Lake Park, MN
- St. Louis Park High School, St. Louis Park, MN
- West Central Area High School, Barrett, MN
- Wright Technical Center, Buffalo, MN



Grant Review Summary

According to data from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, nursing assistants are the sixth highest in-demand job in the state of Minnesota. This need has only been exacerbated by the pandemic. The current pipeline of participants pursuing a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) credential is not poised to meet the demand. To address this need, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education convened a work group of state agencies, higher education institutions, and long-term care providers to implement a recruiting and training program. The Nursing Assistant Initiative (NA Initiative) was created to offer resources and supports to those pursuing a CNA credential from the first day of class to the first day on the job. The NA Initiative provides funding for tuition, fees, materials, and additional supports to cover the cost of transportation and technology.

The grantee reports the following outcomes between 12/20/2021 and 6/22/2022:



Program Visibility

The NA Initiative raised awareness about the importance, value, and necessity of the nursing assistant profession. On numerous occasions, the Governor’s Office, state agencies, media outlets, high schools, colleges, and community organizations encouraged people to consider joining the profession through the NA Initiative and serve in long-term care facilities. Although there is not expected to be long-term state or federal funding available to continue the NA Initiative, participants are still inquiring about enrollment. Colleges and private training providers are guiding participants through other financial options with the goal of continuing to support the pipeline into the nursing assistant profession.



Participants Progress

Most participants whose training was supported by the NA Initiative have completed classes. To date, 1,032 participants have completed their classes and exams with training providers, and 365 participants have completed their exams with high schools. Within six months, the NA Initiative has supported 1,397 individuals, who are ready to



enter the workforce and meet the growing demand of the profession. In a recent survey, 56% of participants self-reported as being employed as nursing assistants. Additional coursework will be offered during summer and fall terms for new participants seeking the CNA credential.



Minimizing Education Barriers for Participants

The NA Initiative provides participants with funds for transportation and technology needs. During the onsite monitoring visit, a handful of participants expressed their appreciation for having funds for reliable transportation. They were able to focus more on learning instead of how they were going to get to class.



Connecting with Employers

As participants near exams, colleges and private training providers introduce participants to potential employers. The employers are welcome onsite and in virtual settings to share information about joining their teams as nursing assistants. These interactions provide participants with opportunities to network and consider employment options that will work well for them.

Grantee Feedback



Best Practices

The NA Initiative brought forth some innovative approaches. One approach was led by a college instructor who felt participants needed a means to connect and ask questions outside of the classroom. Therefore, the instructor held online office hours for three hours every day. Any participant in a NA Initiative supported program, throughout the state, could visit during office hours to ask questions.

Overall, the NA Initiative program did an exceptional job at strengthening services for participants. Program instructors and staff went above and beyond regular program services to expand and strengthen services for NA Initiative participants. For example, instructors and staff would coordinate additional study sessions.

During the virtual monitoring visit, the training provider described having an open-lab environment. Participants could visit onsite whenever convenient and practice their skills.



Challenges

The NA Initiative encountered some challenges. Most of the challenges stem from the program going into effect very quickly with minimal time for state agencies, colleges, and private training providers to plan. For example, participants who attended in January had limited opportunities to make up classes if they missed a few days. This led to different completion rates in comparison to participants who attended later classes.

Another challenge has been various changes among exam requirements. Unfortunately, the NA Initiative overlapped with a planned change in the vendor that provides the Certified Nurse Aide testing services in Minnesota. This resulted in delays in testing while the transition was made. Changes to testing protocols, such as limits on the number of students who could be tested in any given space and how testing was conducted, impacted testing capacity in the early months of the NA Initiative. Colleges and training providers have noted a decline in the number of participants who pass the exam on the first attempt, particularly the knowledge component, which seemed to especially impact English as a Second Language (ESL) students. While a decrease in pass rates is not unusual when tests are changed, stakeholders are meeting regularly to identify ways to improve curricula, processes, and procedures related to testing.

Training Provider Feedback

Training providers partnering with the NA Initiative have been vital to the success of the program. They were able to quickly address the needs of participants and administer classes. Training providers were organized, flexible, and patient throughout the program.

During the onsite monitoring visit, an instructor at Minneapolis Community and Technical College reported the NA Initiative as being well organized and meeting a definite need in the health care industry. The instructor described NA Initiative participants as relaxed and curious. In her opinion, the program being at no cost for participants increased interest in becoming a nursing assistant.

During the virtual monitoring visit, a program coordinator at Prime Time Medical Training highlighted the importance of making classes engaging and flexible for participants. She discussed how fostering commitment to the program is key to having participants attend classes and complete exams.



Photo of Kate (Crookston, MN)



This class helped me take my first steps into the nursing field. Through it, I've been able to work a job that I love with amazing coworkers and residents!

Kate —Benedictine Living Community (Crookston, MN)

The next generation class helped me get a job as a CNA! I am very grateful for this opportunity.

Hennepin Technical College student

This was a great opportunity during the time of Covid, to help those in need of a new job skill and those who are struggling in the healthcare system.

Minneapolis Community and Technical College student

Participant Feedback

“Marking it a free service is what made it possible for me to move through and on to my current position in three months. If the state is serious about its commitment to public health, this program should remain in effect.”

“The program was designed wonderfully to teach us and help us become great at becoming a CNA. I learned so much from this program and from my awesome instructor! I passed the CNA exam with 90% on the knowledge exam and 100% on the skill’s portion of the state exam as well! I truly believe that none of that would have been possible without the knowledge and persistence of the HeartCert staff! Thank you all for everything that you do for people like us who enjoy what we do and to give us the proper skills to become better.”

Kate, a recent NA Initiative graduate employed at Benedictine Living Community in Crookston, MN, described her experience as “Outstanding!” She added, “Without Next Gen [NA Initiative] it wouldn’t be possible to be where I am today. I would not have been able to work in hospice. Thanks so much for the opportunity!”

Financial Reconciliation Summary

Grant Period: December 20, 2021 through December 31, 2022

Grant Awarded: \$3,168,809

Payments Made: \$2,134,933

Marketing: \$40,000

The grantee tailored a marketing campaign to the participant populations, parents, school counselors, teachers and faculty to increase enrollment in CNA classes being offered at all participating institutions.

Classes \$2,169,376

The grantee provided Certified Nursing Assistant classes to interested and eligible participants at no cost to participants. Classes included required books/materials, scrubs, and certification exam fees.

Additional Support: \$687,750

The grantee supported eligible participants attending Certified Nursing Assistant classes by providing coaching/mentoring, emergency grants to overcome barriers to enrollment, and technology supports.

Technology: \$40,000

The grantee provided resources to offset technology needs for operating Certified Nursing Assistant classes at participating institutions.

Administration: \$231,683

Grantee administration of the program included staff time; indirect costs; providing training and support for faculty and participant support coach; convening and/or facilitating subcommittee work related to enrollment, marketing, and providing incentives; performing required reporting requirements, project management; and other administrative tasks and roles to ensure program's success.



Conclusion

The Nursing Assistant Initiative (NA Initiative) was developed and put into place in record time to meet the urgent need for nursing assistants in the state of Minnesota. All parties involved in the program were committed to the success of participants. Training providers answered the call to prepare participants for the nursing assistant profession. As participants completed their programs, they shared their positive experiences with others, which led to more interest in the program. If funding were to be available in the future for the NA Initiative, there are individuals waiting, ready to train and excited to enter the workforce. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education thanks Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, especially Minnesota State HealthForce Center of Excellence, for their overwhelming dedication to the Nursing Assistant Initiative.





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