WCN NEWS
WASHINGTON CENTER FOR NURSING
It's About Washington's Health
The Washington Center for Nursing is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit *Quarterly Newsletter | Qtr 3 2026*

EVOLUTION OF THE WASHINGTON CENTER FOR NURSING: DATA, DIVERSITY, AND LEADERSHIP, 2001–2026

2001–2015: Building Washington's Nursing Workforce Infrastructure

The Washington Center for Nursing (WCN) emerged from a period when Washington lacked a coordinated, statewide mechanism for understanding and addressing nursing workforce needs. In 2001, nursing leaders, legislators, and other stakeholders convened around a growing nursing shortage and developed the state's first strategic plan for nursing. Adopted in 2002, the plan called for the creation of a Center for Nursing focused on nursing resources, education, and workforce issues; WCN was established as an independent nonprofit in 2003.

Data analysis became foundational to WCN's role. After the Legislature authorized a nursing-license surcharge in 2005, WCN was charged with building a nursing workforce database, evaluating nursing education, and providing workforce information and technical assistance. WCN subsequently produced RN, LPN, and ARNP workforce reports, including supply-and-demand projections, licensing analyses, faculty workload research, and studies of newly licensed nurses. Data increasingly provided the evidence base for statewide planning, including Washington's Master Plan for Nursing Education.

Workforce diversity also developed from an early mandate into a defined program of work. WCN studied the experiences of minority and underrepresented new graduate RNs, advanced statewide diversity initiatives, hired lead staff for diversity programs, and launched a year-long Diversity Mentoring Program. WCN also released a 2013 report that examined barriers and supports to nursing diversity across K–12 and higher education.

Leadership development initially centered on career mobility, nursing educators, and statewide collaboration. WCN initiated leadership education for nurse educators and was selected to co-lead Washington's implementation of the Institute of Medicine's Future of Nursing work. By 2014, WCN had evolved from an organization created in response to a shortage into statewide infrastructure connecting data, education, diversity, leadership, and policy.

2015–2026: Moving from Workforce Information to Workforce Action

From 2015 forward, WCN increasingly shifted from producing information to using data to identify problems, convene stakeholders, design interventions, and measure progress. Its work with the Washington Board of Nursing (formerly referred to as the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission) resulted in the Action Now! initiative, which increased funding to nursing education. In addition, WCN's contract with the UW Center for Health Workforce Studies advanced the development of workforce data, including race and ethnicity information, allowing Washington to understand better the composition and distribution of its RN, LPN, and ARNP workforce. This capacity

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expanded substantially after 2020, when WCN added research staff and broadened analysis from nursing supply, demand, and education to include clinical placements, retention, burnout, and workforce diversity. By 2025, its portfolio included statewide supply and demand reports, nursing education trends, clinical placement analysis, workforce snapshots, and a statewide nursing workforce report.

At the same time, diversity evolved from a distinct initiative into a strategy integrated across workforce development, education, leadership, and health equity. WCN research showing a large gap in diversity among faculty, along with guidance from the WCN Diversity Advisory Committee, resulted in the So You Want to Be a Professor workshop. Launched in 2019, this innovative workshop encourages underrepresented nurses and students to pursue academic careers. Later efforts included Caring for Communities, a workshop educating nurses about career opportunities in public and community health; a Diverse Nurse Faculty Mentoring Program; multicultural nursing organization partnerships; and the Nurses of Color Coalition. The Diverse Nurse Faculty Mentorship Program illustrates the evolution toward measurable outcomes: As of 2025, all 34 mentees who participated in the program reported remaining in or advancing within nursing faculty roles.

Leadership likewise broadened from developing individual nurses to mobilizing nurses as leaders in systems change. WCN increasingly convened nurses, educators, employers, regulators, and community partners around statewide challenges. Its COVID-19 workforce study, Clinical Placement Initiative, burnout and retention workgroups, nurse educator initiatives, and Nurses of Color Coalition exemplify this approach.

Across 25 years, the evolution has been one of increasing integration: WCN moved from collecting workforce data, promoting diversity, and developing individual leaders to using data to define problems, centering diverse voices in solutions, and convening nursing leadership to drive coordinated statewide action. This remains consistent with WCN's current mission of building a diverse, highly qualified workforce while using nurses' expertise, influence, and perspective to improve access to nursing care.

WCN workforce reports are available at https://www.wcnursing.org/data-reports-publications/.

WASHINGTON STATE NEEDS MORE NURSE EDUCATORS!

Can you envision yourself teaching nursing students at a community college, university, or as a clinical instructor?

Jumpstart your journey with this unique video series!

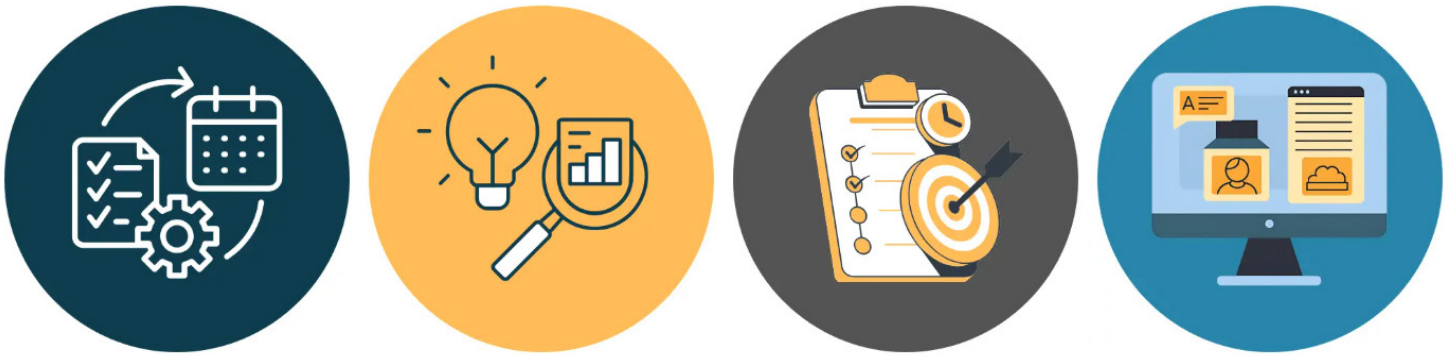
Based on WCN's successful So You Want to be a Professor workshop, this video series brings together experienced nursing faculty to discuss how to build a career path toward nursing education including,

- The unique aspects of nursing education as a career
- Degree requirements
- The variety of teaching environments
- And much more!

This FREE video series breaks down 2-hours of informative content into ten easy-to-watch 6-18 min videos you watch at your convenience.

Click HERE to learn more and register for the FREE video series link now!

WCN Clinical Placement Initiative: Building on Initial Implementation Work



2023-2025
Planning

December 2025
Report to Governor

2025-2026
Implementation

Today

The Washington Center for Nursing and Clinical Placement Initiative stakeholders completed the first phase of implementation work focused on two priorities: supporting healthcare facilities interested in hosting nursing students and expanding clinical placements in nontraditional settings.

In June, WCN finalized the initial Clinical Placement Toolkit developed through the work of both priority committees. The Toolkit provides potential clinical site partners with an overview of the major components involved in establishing a clinical placement. Designed as a roadmap for organizations interested in hosting students, it outlines six components: organizational readiness; affiliation and compliance; student type and infrastructure; the clinical placement process; student and preceptor onboarding; and quality, safety, and sustainability. The Toolkit reflects input gathered from healthcare facilities, nursing education programs, and other CPI partners throughout the spring. Stakeholders contributed existing resources and provided feedback on the information facilities need when considering whether to host students. This included clearer guidance on student learning goals, onboarding information, program expectations, roles and responsibilities, and the types of clinical experiences nursing programs are seeking.

The initial version of the Clinical Placement Toolkit is now available in the CPI Information Center on Hivebrite, the Clinical Placement Initiative's online community and digital communication platform. CPI members can use the platform to share clinical placement opportunities and needs, connect with potential partners, and access additional resources contributed through the initiative. We encourage all CPI stakeholders to join the online CPI community at https://clinicalplacement.wcnursing.org/ to stay connected to this work, receive updates and notices about future meetings and activities, engage with partners across the state, and help advance efforts to strengthen clinical placements throughout Washington.

Looking Ahead

WCN will continue expanding the Toolkit with more detailed guidance, tools, examples, and resources, as well as continuing to facilitate outreach to rural and nontraditional healthcare organizations. WCN is also exploring additional ways to help prospective sites understand the placement process and connect with nursing education programs. CPI stakeholders will continue to help shape this work and inform which recommendation from the CPI Final Report may be advanced next.

Stay tuned for more updates as this work continues to evolve and stakeholders collaborate to strengthen clinical placement capacity and support Washington's future nursing workforce.

Nurses of Color Coalition Plans Its Next Chapter

On August 18, 2026, the WCN Nurses of Color Coalition met to reflect on its history and plan for its next chapter.

For more than three years, the coalition has provided a space where nurses of color can share experiences, build relationships, and find support. Over time, its work has grown to include representation, retention, mentorship, leadership development, advocacy, nursing education equity, and professional growth across Washington State.

Members affirmed the proposed 2026–2027 work as the foundation for the coalition's next phase. They also identified the development of a charter as an important next step. The charter will define the coalition's purpose and membership, establish its leadership and decision-making structure, and set expectations for participation, safety, and accountability. It will also clarify the coalition's relationship with WCN.

Members also had a candid conversation about ally participation. They emphasized that regular coalition meetings should remain centered on nurses of color so participants can speak openly and draw on their lived experiences. At the same time, members recognized that allies may support the coalition's goals when their role is clearly defined and aligned with coalition priorities.

The charter process will help clarify when allies or guests may participate, what expectations will guide their involvement, and which settings—such as special events—may be appropriate for broader participation. These questions remain open.

WCN will continue to convene the coalition monthly and steward the space. WCN will also continue supporting charter development and creating opportunities for coalition members to provide feedback.

The next phase is an opportunity to add structure while preserving the heart of the coalition: a strong sense of connection and belonging. Mutual support will remain central, along with opportunities for leadership and collective action. The coalition will continue building statewide relationships and exploring areas of work around mentorship, leadership development, retention, listening sessions, outreach, and advocacy.

Through continued collaboration, the Nurses of Color Coalition will help inform WCN's broader workforce efforts. The Coalition will also continue strengthening a statewide space where nurses of color can connect, lead, and support one another.

For more information, or to learn how to join the Nurses of Color Coalition or participate in allyship work, reach out to Fawzi Belal at FawziB@wcnursing.org.

WCN Nurses of Color Coalition

A group of BIPOC nurse leaders, educators, students, and professionals convening to create a belonging space for the Washington nursing workforce.

For more information contact
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It's About Washington's Health
WCN
WASHINGTON CENTER FOR NURSING

FREE EDUCATION EVENT FOR NURSES

Film Screening & Facilitated Discussion

Limited Seats! Registration Required

Saturday, October 17

10 am to 12:30 pm

Tacoma Community College Auditorium

6501 S 19th St, Tacoma, WA 98466

Open to all RNs, LPNs, nursing students, and the general public!

Register at **RainierOlympicNurses.org**

This activity has been submitted to the Oregon Nurses Association for approval to award contact hours. Oregon Nurses Association is accredited as an approver of nursing continuing education professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

Approved by Conference Resources

Rainier Olympic Nurses Association — Engage · Encourage · Empower · Support

Ebony Nurses Association of Tacoma

Tacoma Community College

Tacoma Community College values diversity and is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Educator. Learn more at tacomacc.edu/nondiscrimination

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON | BOTHELL
SCHOOL OF NURSING AND HEALTH STUDIES

If one of these programs is a fit for you, you are welcome to apply as well.
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FOR OUR HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Degrees Built for Working Schedules

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uwb.edu/nhs/undergraduate/rn-bsn

GRADUATE
uwb.edu/nhs/graduate

The University of Washington Bothell School of Nursing and Health Studies offers three programs built around full-time work schedules. Please share this with anyone on your team who is ready for the next step.

RN to BSN

FOR REGISTERED NURSES HOLDING AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE IN NURSING

Click to learn more

RN-to-BSN

Master of Nursing

FOR NURSES READY TO SHAPE PRACTICE, NOT ONLY DELIVER IT

Ranked No. 1 among public schools offering a master's degree in nursing by U.S. News & World Report.

Master of Nursing

Master of Science in Community Health and Social Justice

FOR STAFF READY TO MOVE FROM DELIVERING SERVICES TO DESIGNING THEM

No nursing background is required and a bachelor's degree in any discipline qualifies, which opens this program to community health workers, care coordinators, outreach staff and program managers. Core courses meet Tuesday afternoons and evenings. Full-time is two years Part-time is four.

Master of Science in Community Health & Social Justice

UW BSN students and alumni from Bothell, Tacoma and Seattle may be eligible to have the graduate application fee pre-paid as funding permits. The RN to BSN and Master of Nursing programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

WABON Offers a Complimentary Regulatory Educational Module

The Module has been updated on the WABON Training and Events webpage. The refreshed content highlights key aspects of Washington State nursing law and regulations and is designed to support learners at all stages, from students to practicing nurses. Participants can get a certificate and two CE hours, which may also benefit early-career nurses and educators integrating regulatory content into curricula.

Explore more at: https://nursing.wa.gov/about-us/events-and-trainings

CARES Program

Compassion, Accountability, Recovery, Empowerment & Safety

Research indicates one out of every 10 nurses experiences difficulty with alcohol or drug use over the course of their career. Fortunately, effective treatment and ongoing support can save a nurse's career and even their life.

The Washington Board of Nursing recognizes the importance of providing early recognition and treatment options for nurses who may be struggling with alcohol or drug use. The Board of Nursing supports monitored treatment of nurses with substance use disorder so that they can return to or continue to practice their profession in a manner that safeguards the public. Washington's **CARES Program** (formerly WHPS) actively works to reduce the stigma surrounding substance use in the nursing profession. Recovery is possible, and every nurse deserves access to confidential, respectful, and empowering support.

For more information visit, https://nursing.wa.gov/cares

Nurses on Boards Coalition (NOBC): Every Nurse, Every Where

NOBC is expanding its global vision for nurse leadership—and Washington nurses are essential to this next decade of impact.

The new goal, **30,000 nurse held board seats by 2035**, reflects the full continuum of governance roles nurses hold across sectors and communities. As the document notes, "We recognize board service as a continuum—spanning formal board seats, committees, councils, advisory groups, elected and appointed roles, and governance experiences that begin as early as nursing school."

If you are a Washington nurse and serve on any board, committee, council, advisory group, or governance body, we encourage you to report every seat you hold. This expanded model ensures nurses everywhere see themselves in this movement—and that your leadership is counted and celebrated!

Click the link below and

Be Counted

https://www.nursesonboardscoalition.org/be-counted/

Nurses on Boards Coalition®

30,000

Nurse-Held Board Seats by 2035

Every Nurse.
Every Board.
Every Where.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

WCNURSING.ORG

To learn more about Washington's nursing workforce, careers in nursing, and nursing leadership.

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