



COMMITTED TO THE FUTURE: NEW RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN APRN CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

Over the last year, WCN, in collaboration with Bridgestone Consulting and Survey Information Analytics, conducted two studies to better understand barriers and facilitators for Advanced Practice Registered Nursing (APRN) student clinical placements. The project steering committee included diverse representation from APRNs, physicians, and physician assistants across academic, clinical, administrative, and government settings. This committee guided both the qualitative and quantitative studies. Together, the findings highlight a central theme: despite significant barriers to clinical placements, preceptors remain deeply committed to strengthening the profession by teaching the next generation of APRNs.

Qualitative Results

The qualitative study drew on first-hand accounts of clinicians, graduates and administrators, using one-on-one interviews and focus groups conducted from September through November 2025.

Barriers: Data shows that the current clinical placement landscape is chaotic and has many obstacles. First, many preceptors maintain heavy patient loads while supervising students without a reduction in clinical duties. Second, large healthcare organizations have increasingly deprioritized preceptorships, while the volume-based financial clinical model penalizes clinicians for non-billable teaching time. Third, integrating students is a manual process with no standardized administrative support across schools and clinical sites. Fourth, in the absence of institutional support, some students must find their own placements through personal networks. This privileges those with a wide range of connections and networks, and creates barriers for students from underrepresented backgrounds. Finally, students face high out-of-pocket costs for housing and travel, alongside the personal strain of leaving families and jobs for rotations in remote areas.

Facilitators: Despite these hurdles, many clinicians are committed to teaching. Preceptors report a strong sense



of professional stewardship, a duty to "give back" to the profession, and ensure the next generation is prepared for complex practice. Preceptors also report personal satisfaction in watching students develop and find that teaching can improve clinic workflow. Finally, hosting students serves as a smart recruitment strategy.

Quantitative Study

Using the above qualitative results to guide the quantitative study, our team collaborated with the steering committee to design a state-wide survey. In January 2026, we launched this survey, targeting eligible preceptors and currently enrolled APRN students. This study yielded 567 responses, including 457 eligible APRN preceptors, 69 students, and 41 responses from other eligible preceptors.

Quantitative Results for Preceptors

Overall, preceptors report that the biggest barriers to precepting are a lack of time for high quality teaching, workload and productivity are negatively impacted, unclear and inconsistent expectations across NP programs, and a lack of collaboration between NP programs. The study shows that 59% of eligible APRN preceptors have precepted an APRN student in Washington State; only 37% did so in the past 12 months. Nearly 25% spend 11–20 hours per week in



the preceptor role. 73% report that their employer provides no dedicated time or financial credit for precepting. Fifty-percent disagree or strongly disagree that precepting time is adequately accounted for in their work schedule; only 4% report clearly defined compensation or time relief. Despite these barriers, a little over half (55%) view precepting as a core professional responsibility, and almost half (49%) report that having a student benefits their own clinical practice.

Quantitative Results for Students

Unlike the larger preceptor sample, only 69 students responded to the survey. Results show that in-person students are nearly universally supported by their schools; 92% are matched through direct assignment, 85% receive full placement support, and 100% receive at least some help from their program. Online students face a starkly different experience; no online student reported receiving full support, 22% received none, and 91% must independently conduct a student-led search to secure their own placement. For hybrid students, 36% are matched through direct assignment, and 10%

receive no support from their program. Due to the limited student sample size, future studies are needed to deepen and expand the sample for statistically significant results.

Conclusion

Based on our findings, we recommend that addressing the clinical placement crisis requires coordinated collaborative action at three levels. First, at the academic level, there must be formal compensation, clearer expectations, and school-led placement coordination so students are not responsible for finding their own sites. Second, clinical institutions should provide protected time, reduced patient loads, and recognition of precepting as a formal professional expectation. Third, state policies need to have incentive structures, rural placement investment, and standardized accountability for program-level placement support. To achieve these collaborative actions, a task force is necessary, and further research is needed to study the improvement process.

APRN STUDENT CLINICAL PLACEMENT BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS

73%

of APRN preceptors receive no dedicated time or financial credit for precepting.



Just 37%

of eligible APRN preceptors have precepted a student in the past 12 months.



While 59%

have precepted at some point, active participation is much lower, suggesting constrained clinical placement capacity



91%

of online APRN students must independently find their own clinical placements.



55%

of preceptors still view precepting as a core professional responsibility despite the barriers.



MENTORING DIVERSE NURSE FACULTY: BUILDING A PIPELINE OF BELONGING, LEADERSHIP, AND RETENTION

How WCN's Diverse Nurse Faculty Mentoring Program is strengthening belonging, retention, and leadership across Washington's nursing education workforce.

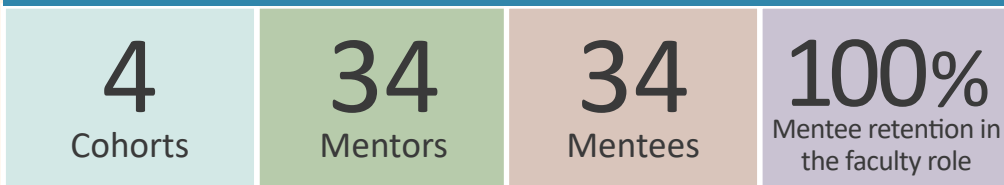
Washington's nursing workforce depends on more than the nurses entering the profession. It also depends on who teaches, mentors, leads, and opens doors for the next generation. The Washington Center for Nursing's Diverse Nurse Faculty Mentoring Program was created to strengthen that pipeline by supporting underrepresented nurse faculty and emerging educators with mentorship, coaching, community, and tools to navigate academic and leadership spaces.

The program grew from a cross-state collaboration between WCN and the Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence. During its development, a planning committee met monthly for one year, studied Colorado's Mentor Training Institute model, and customized the approach to Washington State's nursing education needs. The model was built around a two-day workshop, a year-long mentoring experience, group coaching, and evaluation. Curriculum topics included mentoring considerations for underrepresented faculty, knowing self and growth mindset, bias mitigation, intercultural competence, respectful and vulnerable relationships, powerful communication, resiliency, and healthy boundaries.

Since launching as a pilot in 2022, the program has supported four cohorts and engaged 34 mentors and 34 mentees from 2022 through 2025. Across 2021-2025 aggregate Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) reporting, WCN tracked intercultural development outcomes for 66 participants, helping the program understand how mentors and mentees perceive, navigate, and bridge cultural differences over time.

The impact has been both measurable and personal. Early mentee outcomes showed a 69% completion rate, with 67% meeting monthly. Mentees named scheduling as the main challenge, while identifying support, help navigating academia, and staying

WCN DIVERSE NURSE FACULTY MENTORING PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS



positive as key successes. They also asked for more specific mentoring around balancing academic life, preparing for promotion and tenure, and strengthening teaching and mentoring strategies for students.

Participant reflections show why this work matters. One participant named "Building a mentoring network!" as the most worthwhile part of the workshop. Another shared, "I realized I am not alone," describing how the program helped them move from individual self-doubt toward a broader understanding of bias, community, and collective growth. Another participant summed up the experience simply: "THIS WAS AN EYE OPENING EXPERIENCE!"

The 2025 cohort continued this impact with 7 mentors and 6 mentees. Participants engaged in mentor training workshops, coaching, and IDI debriefing and action planning. Mentee coaching focused on resilience, navigating institutional and sociopolitical challenges, building peer support, courageous conversations, workload management, leadership development, and recognizing accomplishments. Mentor coaching focused on sharing strategies from novice educator experience, connecting mentees to faculty and networking opportunities, supporting mentees through imposter syndrome, and strengthening communication and accountability.

Workshop evaluations reinforced the value of practical, immediately useful tools. Participants highlighted

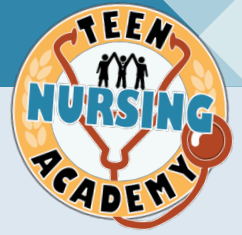
community-building, bias mitigation, growth mindset, feedback strategies, boundary-setting, communication, adaptability, and burnout prevention. In end-of-year feedback, one mentee rated the overall experience, coaching, and likelihood of recommending the program as 5 out of 5 while also reporting major milestones: achieving tenure, graduating with a DNP, and completing publications. Mentor respondents also rated their likelihood of recommending the program as 5 out of 5.

The program's impact now extends beyond individual mentoring pairs. Through the Mentors in Action: Alumni Panel, graduates shared how mentoring advanced their careers and practice while helping others learn how to promote mentoring within professional networks. WCN has also begun quarterly peer connection sessions focused on career growth, connection, confidence, advancement, leadership, education, networking, and professional confidence.

To date, 100% of program mentees remain in nursing faculty positions. The lesson is clear: mentorship is more than a professional development activity. It is a retention strategy, a leadership strategy, and a workforce equity strategy. By investing in underrepresented nurse faculty, WCN is helping build a more diverse, connected, and prepared nursing education workforce for Washington's future.

Application for the next cohort of WCN's Diverse Nurse Faculty Mentoring Program opens in the Fall of 2026! Stay tuned for more information.

WCN TEEN NURSING ACADEMY REACHES 1,400+ MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH HIGHLINE COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP



The Washington Center for Nursing and Highline College successfully delivered the Teen Nursing Academy to 1,405 middle school students in 2026, providing hands-on learning experiences designed to introduce young people to careers in nursing.

The program was delivered at Muckleshoot Tribal School, Sylvester Middle School, Mill Creek Middle School, and Kilo Middle School by 68 Highline nursing students, who earned 471 community and pediatric clinical hours while serving as role models and mentors for participating youth.

Created by WCN, the Teen Nursing Academy connects middle school students with nursing students and professionals through interactive activities that teach both health concepts and nursing career pathways. The program is intentionally designed to reach diverse, under-resourced, rural, and urban communities.

Survey results demonstrate the program's strong educational impact. Before participating, only 36% of students reported knowing "quite a bit" or "a lot" about what nurses do. After participation, that number increased to 55%, representing a 19-percentage-point increase in nursing career awareness.

Students also reported high levels of engagement and learning. Eighty-seven percent said they learned something

new through the experience, while 96% described the activities as at least somewhat fun and engaging. In addition, nearly half of the participating students expressed interest in learning more about becoming a nurse.

The program's reach into diverse communities was particularly notable. Seventy-three percent of participating students identified as racially or ethnically diverse, compared with 36% of Washington State's overall population.

The Teen Nursing Academy continues to demonstrate how early career exploration can expand awareness of and reduce misconceptions about nursing, and inspire students to consider future pathways they may not have previously explored. As WCN continues to expand the program across the state, the Teen Nursing Academy remains an important strategy for strengthening Washington's future nursing workforce.

To view the 2026 full program impact results, visit, <https://www.wcnursing.org/2026-teen-nursing-academy/>



WCN Clinical Placement Initiative: From Planning to Implementation

The Washington Center for Nursing is advancing implementation of the Clinical Placement Initiative, moving from statewide recommendations into action. The Clinical Placement Initiative (CPI) began in 2023 through a legislatively funded proviso for WCN to facilitate communication between nursing education programs and healthcare facilities, with the goal of increasing clinical education and practice experiences for nursing students across Washington State.

Over two years, WCN convened more than 280 stakeholders from nursing education, healthcare, and other organizations across six regions. That work resulted in the Clinical Placement Initiative Final Report, submitted to the Governor and Legislature in December 2025.

From recommendations to action

In February 2026, stakeholders reviewed report recommendations and voted to advance two for immediate implementation through June 2026. Project leads and committees were established for each priority.

The first focuses on approaching facilities not currently hosting students but interested in doing so and identifying what support they need. This work is co-led by Amanda Ellis, MSN, RN, Program Chair and Assistant Professor of Nursing at Lake Washington Institute of Technology, and Lauren Cline, Ed.D, MN, RN, Dean of Nursing at Seattle Central College, with support from Gena Cooper, MSN, RN, MHP, CIC, CPHQ, Director of Clinical Excellence Workforce at the Washington State Hospital Association.

The second focuses on expanding non-traditional clinical placements, led by Priyanka Raut, DNP, MHS, FNP-BC, Senior Director of Nursing at Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic. Through this priority, WCN is also advancing the Eastern Washington regional goal of developing a pilot program framework for outpatient clinics, connecting the statewide recommendation to regional implementation.

Since February, both committees have been meeting regularly, gathering input, and developing resources. To advance their respective priorities, both work groups' leads decided to develop a clinical placement toolkit and host an informational session for facilities interested in hosting nursing students. The toolkit is designed to provide facilities with a starting point, covering the major elements required to establish a clinical placement, from organizational readiness and affiliation through student onboarding, roles and responsibilities, and sustainability.

On May 26, WCN held the informational session for facilities interested in hosting students. During this session, WCN shared a developing clinical placement tool. Facilities not currently hosting

students highlighted a need for clearer guidance on student learning goals, onboarding information, expectations, and syllabi. The session also resulted in outreach to support a rural Eastern Washington school district in expanding placement opportunities and connections for facilities to join Hivebrite and post clinical openings.

In June, WCN convened stakeholders in Eastern Washington to gather regional input on the toolkit and advance the goal of expanding non-traditional (non-acute) clinical placement sites in that region. Eastern Washington has been identified as a priority area for this work, with a focus on connecting outpatient clinics with nursing programs and supporting facilities in establishing placements. The toolkit being developed through this work directly supports that framework, giving outpatient clinics a structured pathway.

Stay connected

Work continues through June 2026. WCN and both priority committees are working toward a finalized clinical placement process diagram, and that will be available to healthcare facilities across Washington State.

To stay engaged and access resources as they are developed, join the CPI community on Hivebrite at clinicalplacement.wcnursing.org. The platform is the central hub for this initiative and offers:

- Updates on CPI events, meetings, and next steps
- Access to toolkit resources and example documents as they are posted
- The ability to post and view clinical placement opportunities available across Washington State
- Connection with nursing education programs, healthcare facilities, and workforce partners engaged in this work

For questions about the Clinical Placement Initiative or to learn more about how to get involved, contact Lucy Merry, Program and Project Manager, at LucyM@wcnursing.org.

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>

WCN NURSES OF COLOR COALITION

CONNECT, COLLABORATE, CONTRIBUTE!

The WCN-Nurses of Color Coalition is a brave space to build community, foster belonging, and step towards creating an inclusive workplace in the nursing profession. The WCN supports the coalition by convening the group virtually monthly.

For more information
and to get involved,
contact

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So You Want to be a Professor Video Series

Presented by the



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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 Bilingual Nurse Videos Help Promote Nursing as a Career

According to the 2023 United States Census Bureau, 20.5% [1 in 5] of Washingtonians speak a language other than English at home. At WCN, we celebrate the rich diversity of Washington's communities.

In healthcare, a diverse nursing workforce strengthens care for all. To celebrate the contributions of bilingual nurses in Washington, WCN created Bilingual Nurses, Stronger Care videos to share the journey into nursing for some of Washington's bilingual nurses.

These videos explore the challenges these nurses overcame to pursue a career in nursing, along with their passion for caring and community that helped them to succeed!



HELP US REACH A NEW GENERATION OF BILINGUAL NURSES!

If you or your organization works with K-12 students... you can help by sharing these videos with students. The more Washington students we reach with these encouraging videos, the more impact they will have!

WCN created these videos to promote nursing as a career to diverse populations and culturally competent care. If you are a student considering a career in nursing, know that nursing needs you. And though there are challenges in pursuing a career in nursing, there are people and resources to help you achieve your goal!

To learn more about nursing as a career, start your journey by visiting,

www.WCNursing/be-a-nurse/

Follow WCN on YouTube for more informative videos!

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/Uck3gToTp1-vqt72Xd9w7xIA>



CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

WCNURSING.ORG

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

