

WASHINGTON NURSING WORKFORCE DATA: WHY IT MATTERS

Frequently asked questions

Q: Why am I required to provide my information when I apply for or renew my Washington State nursing license?

A: The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission and other nursing workforce partners, such as the Washington Center for Nursing and Washington State Nurses Association, analyze nursing workforce practice, education, and demographic data to identify trends in the state's nursing workforce and to take action to address concerns.

Example: 2019 nursing licensure data showed that 32.3% of Washington's RNs are age 55 or older. Knowing that approximately a third of the state's RN workforce could retire over the next ten years is critical to informing industry and policymakers about the need for programs and investments that will develop the state's future nursing workforce ([Washington State's 2019 Registered Nurse Workforce report](#)).

Q: I have concerns about sharing my information electronically. How is my information protected?

A: Any information you provide to the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission is encrypted both when it is in transmission and after it's been received. This ensures all data is protected.

Example: All nursing workforce data that is shared with partners is anonymous. Personal information such as names and addresses are always encrypted.

Q: How is my information used?

A: Data collected is used to understand Washington's nursing workforce. This includes geographical location, license type, work environments, etc. This knowledge helps nursing workforce partners direct resources and address gaps to better serve Washington's communities.

Example: 2019 nursing licensure data showed that Washington's rural areas had fewer practicing RNs per 100,000 population (560) compared with urban areas (888) ([Washington State's 2019 Registered Nurse Workforce report](#)).

Q: Does nursing workforce analysis happen in real-time?

A: No. First, a data request is made and vetted by Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission. Once approved, data is shared with the requesting organization for analysis, which can take several months or longer, giving us a "snapshot" of the state's nursing workforce at some previous point.

Example: Currently, the Washington Center for Nursing requests data from the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission and publishes workforce survey data reports biennially (the goal is every two years).

Q: Am I required to give my information?

A: Yes. As a nurse in Washington State, regulation requires you to answer survey questions with your license application or renewal. Currently, if survey questions are left unanswered, your initial license or renewal is still processed. In 2023, the Washington State Department of Health will implement a new platform called HELMS (Healthcare Enforcement and Licensing Management System) for all licensed health care professionals. The system will streamline services for licensees and employers. With [HELMS](#), users will be required to complete the survey questions before your initial license or renewal is processed.

Have more
questions?

Email

[Communications@
ncqac.wa.gov](mailto:Communications@ncqac.wa.gov)