



<b>Policy Title:</b>	Refresher/Re-Entry Program Policy	<b>Applicable to:</b>	RNs, RPNs and LPNs
		<b>Approved Date:</b>	January 2013
<b>Responsibility Authority:</b>	Nurses Recruitment & Retention Fund (NRRF) Committee	<b>Review Date:</b>	January 2013
		<b>Revised Date:</b>	July 24, 2023
		<b>Next Review Date:</b>	January 2028

## 1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Established in 1999, the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund (NRRF) is committed to enhancing the delivery of health services in the province of Manitoba, by addressing issues of nursing supply. Main functions of the NRRF include the development of strategies to assist with the recruitment and retention of Registered Nurses (RNs), Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs), and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in Manitoba.

In 2022, the management and oversight of the NRRF funds were transferred to the Patient Care Optimization Committee (PCOC). The administration of the NRRF will be managed by the Manitoba Healthcare Providers Network.

To recruit experienced individuals who no longer maintain active registration back into the Manitoba workforce, the NRRF supports the use of funds for enrolment in RN, RPN and LPN Refresher courses.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

Nurses constitute approximately 2/3 of health care professionals across Canada. Therefore, nurses play integral roles in promoting and maintaining a system of health, which addresses the needs of populations, ensures high quality care, and fosters the support and confidence of the public.

A shortage of qualified nurses has been well substantiated. Subsequently, employers have had increasing difficulty filling positions across the country. To offset issues of inadequate numbers, the majority of governments have initiated strategies for recruitment. One strategy for recruitment is the use of financial compensation to facilitate and encourage individuals who have previously been registered as nurses, to upgrade skills in order to re-enter the profession.

## 3.0 PURPOSE

- 3.1** To encourage the re-entry of qualified individuals into the Manitoba RN, RPN and LPN workforce.
- 3.2** To provide financial support for experienced individuals previously educated as RNs, RPNs and LPNs to return to the profession.
- 3.3** To assist eligible Manitoba employers to decrease RN, RPN, and LPN vacancies.

## 4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 Reimbursement for Refresher or Re-Entry Program:** Financial support for an individual to re-enter the RN, RPN and LPN workforce, contingent upon the completion of approved RN, RPN or LPN Refresher or Re-Entry Program
- 4.2 Refresher or Re-Entry Agreement:** A written contract stating the RN's, RPN's or LPN's agreement to repay funds to the NRRF, if they do not successfully complete the Refresher or Re-Entry program by the date specified within the contract.
- 4.3 Return of Service Agreement (ROSA)t:** A written contract stating the nurse's agreement to provide nursing service with an eligible employer in Manitoba for a one-year period of time, in return for the payment of the Refresher or Re-Entry Program costs by the NRRF. The ROSA period will be extended by the full term of any leave of absence which is four (4) weeks or greater.
- 4.4 Approved Refresher or Re-Entry Program:** A Refresher or Re-Entry program that is recognized by the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM), College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba (CRPNM) or College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba (CLPNM) in preparing individuals for licensure as RNs, RPNs or LPNs in Manitoba.
- 4.5 New Student:** An individual who is not currently enrolled in a RN, RPN or LPN Refresher or Re-Entry program.
- 4.6 Existing Student:** An individual who is currently enrolled in a RN, RPN or LPN Refresher or Re-Entry program.
- 4.7 Completed Student:** An individual who has successfully graduated from a RN, RPN or LPN Refresher or Re-Entry program

## 5.0 Policy

### This policy applies to:

#### 5.1 Eligible Individuals:

- 5.1.1** Individuals who are Manitoba residents and are accepted into an approved RN, RPN or LPN Refresher or Re-Entry Program.
- 5.1.2** Confirmed employment with an approved employer, in a permanent or term position that is at least one year in duration and 0.6 EFT or higher. This includes multiple permanent or term positions for a duration of one year or longer where the combined EFT is 0.6 EFT or higher. **This excludes ALL terms that are under one year in length, indefinite terms, and casual employment.**

#### 5.2 Eligible Employers:

- 5.2.1** Employers receiving public funds from the province of Manitoba. This includes but is not limited to Manitoba Health, the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs), Cancer Care Manitoba and Shared Health. Private for-profit agencies are not eligible.

## 6.0 CORE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

### 6.1 Standards:

#### 6.1.1 Nurses Responsibilities:

- 6.1.1.1** The nurse is responsible for reviewing of the terms and conditions of this policy for the reimbursement of Refresher or Re-Entry program, and upon acceptance, compliance with the terms and conditions.
- 6.1.1.1** The nurse must have registered with an approved Refresher or Re-Entry program.

- 6.1.1.2 The nurse must complete the required education courses.
- 6.1.1.3 The nurse must secure a position in accordance with 5.1.2 within six (6) months of completion of the course. The nurse must sign a return of service agreement with their Employer to begin after successful completion of the Refresher or Re-Entry program.
- 6.1.1.4 If the conditions within this policy are not fulfilled by the date specified in the Refresher or Re-Entry agreement, the recipient agrees to repay Manitoba Health the amount of the Refresher or Re-Entry reimbursement.
- 6.1.1.5 The nurse must submit requests for funding along with the required documentation to the Facilitator of the NRRF.

#### **6.1.2 Employer Responsibilities:**

- 6.1.2.1 The employer will be responsible for reviewing the terms and conditions of the Refresher or Re-Entry Program policy and compliance with the terms and conditions.
- 6.1.2.2 The employer will be responsible for confirming a permanent or term position at 0.6 EFT or higher for a minimum of one year within their organization. This includes multiple permanent or term positions for a duration of one year or longer where the combined EFT is 0.6 or higher. **This excludes ALL terms that are under one year in length, indefinite terms and casual employment.**
- 6.1.2.3 The employer will be responsible for retaining complete records for each nurse who receives a reimbursement of Refresher or Re-Entry program costs from the NRRF.
- 6.1.2.4 The employer will be responsible for notifying the NRRF if the one-year service agreement is not fulfilled by the completion of the Employer Verification of Incomplete Service Agreement Form (Appendix 8.2).

#### **6.1.3 NRRF Responsibilities:**

- 6.1.3.1 The Facilitator of the NRRF will review all requests for reimbursement of costs for Refresher or Re-Entry program and approve applications in accordance with this policy.
- 6.1.3.2 The Facilitator will defer to the PCOC Committee for final approval or denial if the application is outside of policy guidelines or based on special circumstances.
- 6.1.3.3 The Facilitator of the NRRF will advise individuals of the status of their application via letter.
- 6.1.3.4 The Facilitator will maintain an account of approvals.
- 6.1.3.5 The NRRF will provide a public report annually.

#### **6.2 Procedures:**

- 6.2.1 The NRRF reviews allocations annually for the purposes of supporting individuals who enroll in Refresher or Re-Entry programs.

- 6.2.2** The required documentation and requests for funding are to be submitted to the Facilitator of the NRRF using the Application for Financial (Educational) Assistance Form (Appendix 8.1).
- 6.2.3** The Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund will support up to 80% of course costs to a maximum of \$2000 per individual for Refresher or Re-Entry Program costs or portion thereof.
- 6.2.4** The amount of the Refresher or Re-Entry program reimbursement will be forgiven after one year of nursing service within Manitoba in accordance with 5.1.2.
- 6.2.5** For nurses receiving non-repayable funding from outside sources, the amount of funding provided will be deducted from the eligible amount.
- 6.2.6** Non-compliance with the Refresher or Re-Entry program agreement will necessitate repayment of funds. Reasons include:
- Academic failure
  - Failure to secure employment within six (6) months of program completion
  - Failure to complete twelve (12) consecutive months of employment with an approved employer
  - Failure to pass the Canadian licensing exam.
- 6.2.7** Nurses who have completed a Refresher or Re-Entry Program outside of Manitoba, and have secured a position as a nurse in Manitoba, may apply directly to the Facilitator of the NRRF for reimbursement of 80% of course costs to a maximum of \$2,000. The applicant and their employer must sign a one-year service agreement with the Province of Manitoba.
- 6.2.8** Nurses who have previously failed the RN, RPN or LPN licensing exam may apply for reimbursement of course costs upon the successful completion of the licensing exam, and based on confirmation of registration with the CRNM, CRPNM or CLPNM. Funding for education programs may be provided on a retroactive basis once receipts are provided.
- 6.2.9** Nurses who change employers within their one-year term of service but maintain their eligibility for reimbursement of RN, RPN or LPN Refresher Program costs must submit a revised return of service agreement signed by the new employer. The nurse must fulfill the remainder of their contract with the new employer.
- 6.2.10** Upon receipt of a written request, the NRRF will consider extending the time to complete the one-year return of service agreement, or grant temporary absences. The NRRF Committee will examine each request based on individual circumstances
- 6.2.11** Refresher or Re-Entry program assistance can be received combined, and in conjunction with other financial assistance from NRRF. However, the return of service for any combination of grants will be consecutive.
- 6.2.12** The amount of the reimbursement of RN, RPN or LPN Refresher or Re-Entry Program costs will be forgiven after the return of service agreement has been completed.

## **7.0 GUIDELINES**

### **7.1 New Students:**

- 7.1.1** Nurses must contact their regulatory college for refresher or re-entry

program information. Nurses must then apply directly to the Refresher or Re-Entry program.

- 7.1.2 The Refresher or Re-Entry programs will determine eligibility, and if appropriate with a letter of acceptance, provide the application form for reimbursement of Refresher or Re-Entry course costs from the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund.
- 7.1.3 The Facilitator of the NRRF will provide the Refresher or Re-Entry program with copies of the documentation.
- 7.1.4 Upon registration with the Refresher or Re-Entry program, the nurse will receive credit towards the costs of tuition to a maximum of \$2000.

## **7.2 Existing Students:**

- 7.2.1 Nurses may forward the completed Application for Financial (Educational) Assistance Form (Appendix 8.1) and the appropriate documentation to the Facilitator of the NRRF for review and consideration regarding the reimbursement of Refresher course costs within six (6) months of completion of the course.
- 7.2.2 Documentation must include receipts detailing total course costs of tuition and books/course materials.
- 7.2.3 The nurse may be eligible for a refund or credit of 80% of total expenses.
- 7.2.4 The amount credited to the Refresher or Re-Entry program and the amount refunded to the nurse will not exceed 80% of total course costs. The maximum dollar amount of the refund will not exceed \$2000.
- 7.2.5 Nurse must have secured employment within six (6) months of completion of the Refresher or Re-Entry Program.

## **7.3 Completed Students:**

- 7.3.1 Nurses must provide evidence of completion of the Refresher or Re-Entry Program.
- 7.3.2 Nurse must have secured employment within six (6) months of completion of the Refresher or Re-Entry Program.
- 7.3.3 Nurses may forward the completed Application for Financial (Educational) Assistance Form (Appendix 8.1) and the appropriate documentation to the Facilitator of the NRRF for review and consideration regarding reimbursement of Refresher or Re-Entry program costs.
- 7.3.4 Documentation must include receipts detailing total course costs of tuition and evidence of the successful completion of the program.
- 7.3.5 The amount refunded to the nurse will not exceed 80% of total course costs. The maximum dollar amount of the refund will not exceed \$2000.

## **8.0 POLICY DOCUMENTS**

- 8.1 Application for Financial (Educational) Assistance Form
- 8.2 Employer Verification of Incomplete Service Agreement Form