



**Policy Title:** CONTINUING EDUCATION GRANT

**Applicable to:** Employer Organizations and Continuing Education Committees, And Eligible Applicants

**Responsibility Authority:** Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund

**Approved Date:** June 26, 2015

**Revised Date:** May 6, 2025

**Next Review Date:** October 2027

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## 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 function of the NRRF include the development of strategies to assist with the recruitment and retention of Registered Nurses (RNs), Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), and Frontline Nurse Managers 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 Shared Health.

The **Continuing Education Grant** is provided by the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund (NRRF), to Employer Organizations (EOs) and other Eligible Employers on a yearly basis, and administered by their NRRF Continuing Education Committees.

The **Continuing Education Grant** provides Eligible Applicants with an opportunity for self-directed learning for their professional development.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

Established in 1999, the NRRF was developed to increase the supply of nurses and decrease nursing vacancies in Manitoba through a variety of recruitment and retention strategies.

One strategy for retaining nurses in the workforce is through the provision of opportunities for continuing education. The funding of self-directed continuing education activities contributes to the ongoing personal and professional development of Manitoba's nurses.

## 3.0 PURPOSE

The opportunity to pursue continuing education is both a necessity and a goal of nurses in Manitoba. The **Continuing Education Grant** exists to assist Eligible Applicants, employed by Eligible Employers, to pursue professional development opportunities. A commitment to, and facilitation of continuing education also helps employers attract and retain skilled nurses.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

**Eligible Applicant** – Front-line Grad Nurses (GNs), Registered Nurses (RNs), Registered Psychiatric Nurses, (RPN)s, Nurse Practitioners (NP) , Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Nurse Educators, as well as Front-line Nurse Managers.

**Continuing Education Committee** – A committee that is representative of a cross-section of direct care nurses

and management staff, responsible for administering continuing education funds provided by the NRRF, in accordance with this policy and the NRRF standardized Terms of Reference, **(attached as Appendix A)**. In the case of a Continuing Education Committee being established by other Eligible Employers, the committee must also have an equal representation of union and management.

**Continuing Education** – Learning activities undertaken by the nurse to enhance nursing competencies and professional development. This may include conferences, workshops, or formal courses. It may also include education provided by the employer, provided the educational session and topic were requested by the nurse and not required by the employer. It can not be used for professional dues, course materials such as books, or equipment such as laptops or audio-visual materials, etc. Funding may include short term salary replacement up to a maximum of 14 days.

**Eligible Employer** – The Province of Manitoba or an employer that receives funding or financial support from the Province of Manitoba. This includes, but is not limited to any Regional Health Authority.

**Please note:** Private, for-profit agencies are not considered Eligible Employers.

## 5.0 POLICY

This policy applies to RHAs, other Eligible Employers, Continuing Education Committees and Eligible Applicants. The total amount of funding to be assigned to the Continuing Education Fund shall not exceed \$1,450,000.00. This amount shall be disbursed proportionally amongst those Employer Organizations eligible for the grant based on number of nurses employed by the Employer Organizations. The Employer Organizations noted below are responsible to provide funding from their allocation for approved nurses outside the central table bargaining group. Membership of each continuing education committee is based on the sites listed in Appendix D of the collective agreement.

Funding to be allocated as per the following percentages noted below (*effective fiscal year April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026*):

WCHREO – 44.92%

SHEO – 22.97%

PMHREO – 14.39%

SHSSREO – 8.42%

IEHREO – 5.46%

NHREO – 3.84%

## 6.0 CORE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: STANDARDS, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES

### 6.1 Standards

#### Eligible Applicants

- Nurses shall apply for NRRF funding through their Continuing Education Committees within 30 days of course completion to qualify for reimbursement.
- Applications shall include proof of attendance and proof of payment to be eligible for reimbursement.

#### Continuing Education Committees

- Continuing Education Committees shall be established by Eligible Employer Organization, in accordance with this NRRF policy and standardized Terms of Reference.
- Continuing Education Committees are responsible for providing Eligible Applicants with information regarding the availability of this grant and awareness of the policy.
- Committees shall ensure funds are distributed in an equitable manner, and that nurses are aware of important timelines for reimbursement, in accordance with this policy.
- Reports shall be submitted to NRRF within 30 days of the end of each quarter, based on the fiscal year (April 30, July 31, October 31, and January 31).
- Records shall be retained by the Committee that detail fund activities and associated costs at an individual level.
- NRRF will not provide reimbursement for projected expenses. Only expenses that have been incurred will be reimbursed.
- Any over expenditures must have prior written approval.

#### NRRF Committee

- NRRF will fund RHAs, and other approved Eligible Employers to reimburse Eligible Applicants who have completed education for the purpose of professional development, within the last fiscal quarter, in accordance with this policy.
- NRRF has the authority to withhold future funding allocations based on failure to submit quarterly reports.
- NRRF has the authority to request additional information as required to determine an applicant's eligibility for reimbursement.

#### **NRRF Facilitator**

- The NRRF Facilitator shall seek guidance from the PCOC regarding requests that are unusually large, outside of policy guidelines, or based on special circumstances.
- The NRRF Facilitator shall maintain an account of Continuing Education allocations.
- The NRRF Facilitator shall develop an annual report based on submitted information.
- Reimbursement shall be based on eligible expenses upon review of each quarterly report.
- Any allocated funds not used by an Employer Organization and Eligible Employers by the end of the fourth quarter will be reallocated to other requests and areas of need.
- NRRF will not provide funds for projected expenses. The expenses must have been incurred.

### **6.2 Procedures for Continuing Education Committees**

**Continuing Education Committees** shall follow these reporting procedures and use the following forms:

#### **1) Summary Letter (On letterhead)**

- Each quarter, the Committee shall submit all relevant forms, accompanied by a brief cover letter. This letter must include the total amount being requested for reimbursement, contact information for the Chair of their Committee, and a few education highlights, for example: programs that benefited staff and clients, any challenges or lessons learned.

#### **2) Committee Membership Form (Appendix B)**

- A completed membership form shall be sent to NRRF at the beginning of each fiscal year and with any changes to the committee to illustrate that membership requirements are being met.

#### **3) Quarterly Funding Report (Appendix C – Excel Spreadsheet Tab 1)**

- Must be updated and sent to NRRF each quarter.

#### **4) Group Education Report Template (Appendix C – Excel Spreadsheet Tab 2)**

- Must be completed and sent to NRRF each quarter if any group education activity was offered.
- Must be accompanied by **Group Education Financial Report (Appendix F)**. Must include names of group workshop(s) offered to staff during the last quarter, and attendance details.

5)

#### **6) Individual Education Report Template (Appendix C – Excel Spreadsheet Tab 3)**

- Must be completed for all individual activities and sent to NRRF each quarter as applicable. Examples of individual activities include a conference or workshop attended by an individual nurse, or a completed university course.

#### **7) Continuing Education Committee Report Checklist (Appendix E)**

- Reference Tool for Committee Chair and/or Facilitator.

### **6.3 Guidelines – Not Applicable**

## **7.0 POLICY DOCUMENTS**

**APPENDIX A:** Continuing Education Committees' Terms of Reference

**APPENDIX B:** Continuing Education Committee Membership Form

**APPENDIX C:** Quarterly Funding Report Template (Excel Tab 1)

**APPENDIX C:** Group Education Report Template (Excel Tab 2)

**APPENDIX C:** Individual Education Report Template (Excel Tab 3)

**APPENDIX D:** Continuing Education Committee Education Checklist

## **8.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS - N/A**