



Policy Title:	Refresher Program Policy	Applicable to:	RNs, RPNs and LPNs
		Approved Date:	January 2013
Responsibility Authority:	Nurses Recruitment & Retention Fund (NRRF) Committee	Review Date:	January 2013
		Revised Date:	January 2013
		Next Review Date:	January 2022

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.

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 Courses:** 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 Program.
- 4.2 Refresher Agreement:** A written contract stating the RN's, RPN's or LPN's commitment to repay funds to the NRRF, if they do not successfully complete the Refresher course by the date specified within the contract.
- 4.3 Return of Service Commitment:** A written contract stating the employee's commitment to provide nursing service with an eligible employer in Manitoba for a one year period of time, in return for the investment of the Refresher Course costs by the NRRF.
- 4.4 Approved Refresher Program:** A Refresher 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 course.
- 4.6 Existing Student:** An individual who is currently enrolled in a RN, RPN or LPN Refresher program.
- 4.7 Completed student:** An individual who has successfully graduated from a RN, RPN or LPN Refresher 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 Program.

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 and the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs). 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 review of the terms and conditions of this policy for the reimbursement of Refresher courses, and upon acceptance, compliance with the terms and conditions.

- 6.1.1.2 The nurse must have registered with an approved Refresher program on or after April 1, 2009.
- 6.1.1.3 The nurse must complete the required education courses.
- 6.1.1.4 The nurse must sign a return of service commitment to begin after successful completion of the Refresher program.
- 6.1.1.5 If the conditions within this policy are not fulfilled by the date specified in the Refresher agreement, the recipient agrees to repay Manitoba Health the amount of the Refresher reimbursement.
- 6.1.1.6 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 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 12 months 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 employee who receives a reimbursement of Refresher costs from the NRRF.
- 6.1.2.4 The employer will be responsible for notifying the NRRF if the one year service commitment 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 courses and approve applications in accordance with this policy.
- 6.1.3.2 The Facilitator will defer to the NRRF 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 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 course costs or portion thereof.
- 6.2.4** The amount of the Refresher reimbursement will be forgiven after 12 months of nursing service within Manitoba.
- 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 agreement will necessitate repayment of funds. Reasons include:
- Academic failure
 - Failure to secure employment within 6 months of program completion
 - Failure to complete 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 Programs outside of Manitoba, but have registered after April 1, 2009 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** Applicants 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 commitment signed by the new employer. The employee 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 12 month return of service commitment, or grant temporary absences. The NRRF Committee will examine each request based on individual circumstances
- 6.2.11** Refresher 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 Program costs will be forgiven after the return of service commitment has been completed.

7.0 GUIDELINES

7.1 New Students:

- 7.1.1** Nurses must contact their regulatory college for refresher program information. Nurses must then apply directly to the Refresher program.
- 7.1.2** The Refresher programs will determine eligibility, and if appropriate with a letter of acceptance, provide the application form for reimbursement of Refresher course costs from the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund.
- 7.1.3** The Facilitator of the NRRF will provide the Refresher program with copies of the documentation.
- 7.1.4** Upon registration at the Refresher program, the nurse will receive credit towards the costs of tuition to a maximum of \$2000.

7.2 Existing Students:

- 7.2.1** Nurses must have registered (or finalized registration by payment) for the RN, RPN or LPN Refresher Course on or after April 1, 2009.
- 7.2.2** 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.
- 7.2.3** Documentation must include receipts detailing total course costs of tuition and books/course materials.
- 7.2.4** The nurse may be eligible for a refund or credit of 80% of total expenses.
- 7.2.5** The amount credited to the Refresher 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.

7.3 Completed Students:

- 7.3.1** Nurses must have registered (or finalized registration by payment) for the RN, RPN or LPN Refresher course on or after April 1, 1999.
- 7.3.2** Nurses must provide evidence of completion of the Refresher course.
- 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 course 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

8.2 Application for Financial (Educational) Assistance Form

8.3 Employer Verification of Incomplete Service Agreement Form