



New Jersey Action Coalition
Joining Forces for Healthful Communities

Nursing Student Recruitment Toolkit 2023



A Product of the New Jersey Action Coalition's NAM Future of Nursing Education Workgroup

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Actions for deans, administrative faculty leaders, faculty, course directors, and staff of nursing education programs to support the academic progression of socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

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Recruitment Toolkit for New Jersey Schools of Nursing

Demand for nurses continues to outpace the supply. The New Jersey Collaborating Center for Nursing (NJCCN) reported that New Jersey saw a 40.8% increase in job postings for RNs and a 55.5% increase in jobs posted for LPNs for 2020-2021ⁱ. The U.S. Department of Laborⁱⁱ reports that demand for registered nurses will grow by 9% over the next ten years. While the job market for nurses remains robust, anecdotal reports from nursing schools reveal that fewer new student applications are being received.

In 2021, The National Academies of Medicine released the “Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Health Equity.” In response, the New Jersey Action Coalition (NJAC) for Nursing convened thought leaders throughout the state to begin strategizing and mobilizing the four chosen recommendations. A subcommittee of the Education Workgroup focused on recruitment and retention strategies for a diverse student nurse population.

This toolkit presents suggestions for how nursing schools can evaluate and strengthen their recruitment efforts. We acknowledge that every educational institution has different resources and structures for promoting enrollment for both the school and the nursing education program. The resources included are intended to inspire nursing program administrators with information to support their recruitment efforts.



Figure 1 NJAC Nurse Recruitment Toolkit 2023

Information Sessions

Many nursing schools encourage or require prospective students to attend an information session before applying to the nursing education program. Information sessions typically cover the role of the nurse, information regarding the school's nursing education program, special requirements for student nurses, and the application process.

Consider the following:

- **How frequently are the information sessions held?** Increasing the frequency of the information session offerings may increase the number of people able to attend. Consider increasing the number of sessions during high-interest times, e.g. start of the semester, after New Year, or after high school graduation season.
- **Are the information sessions held on different days and times?** Are they offered during the evenings or weekends for those working traditional Monday-Friday schedules?
- **Are they offered in-person or remotely?** A mix of both may make the sessions more accessible to those who are not in the immediate geographic area or who do not have access to technology.
- **Where are they held?** Can they be held in the community, e.g. libraries, high schools, or community centers?
- **How is your information session publicized?** Does your admissions team inform new students of upcoming sessions? Are they listed on your website? Shared with local high school guidance counselors? Promoted through social media channels?
- Consider adding information about student support resources, including financial aid.
- **Could you include testimonials** from current or former nursing students?

Program Website

Many people use the internet to research their options for nursing education. Evaluate your nursing program's web presence and ease of navigation.

Consider the following:

- **Do you have a nursing education program website? Is it up to date?**
- **Is it mobile-friendly?**
- **Easy to navigate and find information?**
- **Does it contain hyperlinks to contact school representatives or request more information?**
- **Does your website offer the ability to view it in different languages?**

Adding video content to your website can make it more engaging and interesting. Consider short videos on “The Day in the Life of a Nursing Student at Our College” or “Our College Alumni Success Stories.”

Some schools have reported using commercial services for search engine optimization. This allows your program’s website to result higher on internet search engines.

Social Media

Social media is increasingly the primary source of information for many prospective students. As an emerging field, there are many factors to consider. Carefully evaluate your organizational policies and procedures for utilizing social media for the promotion of a college program.

Consider the following:

- **What kind of social media presence does your nursing program have?**
- **Does your organization have a social media presence?**
- **Does your nursing education program have its presence or is it just promoted through the college’s website?**
- **What permissions might you need from your organization to formally represent your program on social media?**
- **Which social media platforms will you engage with?** The most common are Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok.

For social media to be effective, there must be a strategy behind it. Frequent postings help keep the content in front of users by optimizing the social media company’s algorithms. Some programs assist with creating a social media plan, including planning topics, creating posts, and scheduling postings. Make sure someone is assigned to review comments on your social media posts. Consider removing or addressing negative comments. Some platforms allow comments to be turned off for a posting.

Consider the following:

- **Can you collaborate with your marketing team on this effort?**
- **What about using a marketing student or a work-study student to manage your social media?**

Encourage faculty, staff, and students to like, share, and follow your social media accounts. Consider following other nursing organizations such as the New Jersey Collaborating Center for Nursing (@nj_ccn) and the New Jersey State Nurses Association (@NJSNARegion1).

Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program

The New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program is committed to promoting access to higher education for students from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Recruitment and retention initiatives are among the various offerings provided by EOF programs to support students. If you are interested in exploring how nursing education and the EOF program can work together to enhance student success, connect with the EOF program at your institution. It is important to know that EOF programs offer financial assistance and comprehensive support services, such as counseling, tutoring, and developmental coursework, to eligible students at participating higher education institutions in New Jersey. By partnering with the EOF program, nursing programs can leverage a valuable resource to support and empower minority students from disenfranchised backgrounds.

Consider the following:

- **Does your college have an EOF program?**
- **Can you explore partnerships to get more students interested in nursing?**
- **Some programs have funding for support materials – could your EOF program assist students with additional expenses such as clinical supplies or NCLEX study materials?**

The Rutgers School of Nursing EOF program is an excellent example of how recruitment-related initiatives can positively impact the success of underrepresented students in higher education. The program offers additional student support services, including academic advising and coaching, personal counseling, and advocacy and mentoring, in addition to career and financial aid counseling. The SN-EOF Program is recognized as a national model and has made significant contributions to the recruitment, retention, and graduation of ethnic minority nurses prepared at the baccalaureate level.

The Rutgers School of Nursing EOF Program effectively communicates its comprehensive approach to supporting scholars through various recruitment initiatives, including high school visits, college fairs, and webinars. During these recruitment efforts, the program highlights the benefits of its five-week summer institute for incoming scholars, which includes concurrent support courses in the Sciences, Math, and English, counseling seminars, and special topic seminars in writing, test-taking, and the nursing process.

In addition, the program offers a Pre-junior Clinical Summer Enrichment Program to prepare students for clinical rotations and an NCLEX-RN state board review to ensure licensure success. These components of the program are also emphasized during recruitment presentations. Furthermore, visiting high school scholars have the opportunity to gain hands-on exposure to

what nursing students experience during their junior year and in clinical coursework by visiting the Rutgers School of Nursing simulation lab on the Newark Campus.

The program also emphasizes during its recruitment sessions that they provide student leadership development programs to equip scholars with the necessary skills to become leaders in the nursing profession. This multifaceted approach has earned the SN-EOF Program recognition as a national model, contributing significantly to the retention and graduation of ethnic minority nurses prepared at the baccalaureate level.

For more information on EOF programs and the Rutgers School of Nursing EOF program please visit the following links:

https://www.nj.gov/highereducation/EOF/EOF_Eligibility.shtml

https://www.nj.gov/highereducation/EOF/EOF_PRU_Programs.shtml

<https://sites.rutgers.edu/sn-eof/>

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We must promote available opportunities to all prospective student demographics. Part of that work includes deliberate efforts to reach out to underrepresented populations.

Consider the following:

- Consider recruitment from non-traditional sources. **Can you partner with minority community organizations, or conduct bridge / outreach programs?**
- **Do your marketing images use stock photos that adequately reflect the diversity of your student population?** Could your marketing team take photos of your actual students for use in marketing?
- **Consider the language used in our work.** The Guidelines on Inclusive Language and Images in Scholarly Communicationsⁱⁱⁱ is an excellent resource for ensuring inclusive language.

Evaluate publications, websites, and other communications for accessibility. See the following websites for more information^{iv}:

- Guidance on web accessibility and the ADA: <https://www.ada.gov/resources/web-guidance/>
- W3C Web Accessibility Initiative: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/tips/designing/>
- Tips for online design Sheryl Burgstahler: <https://www.washington.edu/doit/20-tips-teaching-accessible-online-course>
- A synopsis of thought with some commonsense sort of guidance: <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2017/1/ada-compliance-for-online-course-design>

Admission Process

Consider the processes through which new students are on-boarded in your institution.

Consider the following:

- **Can students identify themselves as interested in pursuing nursing as their program of study at the time of the application?**
- **Does your admissions team work with the nursing program to advise these students?**

A welcome message to new potential nursing students could include information about nursing-specific application processes, admission testing, or a nursing program information session. Making a personal connection with students from the beginning can assist them in selecting the correct courses, accessing college resources, and more. See the sample welcome letter in Appendix A.

Appendix A: Sample Welcome Letter

WELCOME Student Name!

*Congratulations on your recent admission to **Our College** as a Pre-Professional Nursing Student!*

We are excited that you have joined the **Our College** family. Please review the following information carefully. Admission to the professional phase of the Nursing Education program is competitive. Acceptance as a pre-professional student does not guarantee acceptance to the professional phase.

Your first steps are to register for your pre-requisite coursework and to attend a nursing information session. Be sure to consult an academic advisor or a success coach about the correct course selection or visit the online catalog here.

Your student account provides you access to the **Our College** Portal. Once on the page, click on the top right-hand button “Sign in” and use the information provided below to log in. In the **Our College** portal, students can access their student emails, schedule academic advising, register for classes, access Blackboard, monitor Financial Aid, and lots more!

If you have trouble accessing your portal, please contact I.T. by emailing tech-help@ourcollege.edu.

Nursing Information Session

As part of the application process for the professional phase of the Nursing Education program, you are required to attend a Nursing Information Session. You should attend a session as early as possible in your course of study – do not wait until you are getting ready to apply! Sessions are held multiple times per month. Click here for upcoming session meetings.

Degree Curriculum

Click here for a list of courses students need to complete, with a passing grade, to graduate from the Nursing Program at **Our College**.

One-Stop Center

Our College remains committed to student success. All students are welcome to visit the One Stop Center during office hours- Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (until 5 p.m. during summer session) and Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (until 4 p.m. during summer session). One Stop Center answers many student inquiries from course registration, financial aid, transfer services, and much more! For more helpful student resource information, like the **Our College** Campus directory, students can also visit this link.

Success Coach

All **Our College** students have a success coach to help guide and support them through their college experience. The Health Professions Division Success Coach is **Mr. Success**. You can schedule a virtual appointment with **Coach Success** by going to the “schedule advisement” tile in your **Our College** portal. Select “Center for Retention and Completion” and select “Search”. **His** list of available appointments will pop up and you can choose the time that works best for your schedule.

Nursing Faculty Advisor

Your nursing advisor is **Professor Awesome**. She can be reached at **awesome@ourcollege.com**

Your advisor is available to offer you assistance and resources should you need them.

Please note, your nursing advisor does not register you into courses nor can they reserve spots on a course list. Course registration questions should go to Open Stop Center, **registration@ourcollege.edu, or dial 555-555-1234.*

Financial Aid and Scholarships

All students are encouraged to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before April 15th for the fall semester or full academic year, and before September 15th for new students and the spring semester only. You should be sure to include the **Our College school code, 001234** so that we receive your information electronically.

To begin the process, visit <https://studentaid.gov>. Additional information can be found here https://ourcollege.edu/admissions_financial.shtml. Financial Aid staff are available to help complete the FAFSA or answer any other questions. Once you have completed the FAFSA, you can visit your **MyCollege portal** to check the status and make sure you've submitted all other required items. Students are additionally encouraged to explore and pursue scholarship opportunities.

Fees & Tuition

Students can find a current listing of fees, tuition, payment plans, and payment deadlines on the Tuition and Fees webpage.

Transfer Credits

The Nursing Education program accepts transfer credits from other educational institutions for general education coursework only. No transfer credits are applied to the professional phase of nursing education coursework.

To have your credits evaluated for transfer, you must submit an official transcript to the **Our College** Enrollment Services office. Foreign transcripts will require, at the student's expense, translation, and evaluation by a NACES-approved outside agency.

Electronic transcripts can be sent to **OurCollege** via the following services: Parchment, National Clearinghouse, Joint Services, and NJ Transfer. Alternatively, official electronic transcripts can also be sent directly from the institution to the following address: **transcripts@ourcollege.edu**. All mailed copies must be addressed to: **Our College Student Records, 123 Main Street, Anytown, USA**. Please refer to this link to get more information **https://www.ourcollege.edu/admissions_transfer.shtml#1**

Professional Phase Nursing Applications

The Nursing Education program offers a day program schedule option and an evening/weekend schedule option. More information regarding these options is provided in the Nursing Education Information Sessions.

The Nursing Department accepts applications for the Professional Phase Nursing Program twice a year:

- March 15th to April 15th for the Fall Day Program
- September 1st to October 1st for the Spring Evening & Weekend Program.

Applications are posted on the nursing website a week before the application period begins.

Professional Phase Nursing Application Prerequisites

- Attend a mandatory Nursing Information Session.
- Successful completion of semester 1 courses (ENG101, CHE107, BIO103, and MAT125). Courses may be in progress at the time of application.
- Cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher

Admission Exam

More information will be provided during the information sessions. All students applying to the professional phase of the Nursing Education Program must submit the results of their Admission Exam with their application.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the nursing office. We can be reached by calling **555-555-1234** or email **nursing@ourcollege.edu**.

Welcome aboard!

ⁱ RN and LPN Demand. (2022). New Jersey Collaborating Center for Nursing. Retrieved from <https://njccn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/RN-and-LPN-Demand-1.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Us department of labor announces \$80m funding opportunity to help train, expand, diversify nursing workforce; address shortage of nurses. (n.d.) U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved from <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20221003>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Guidelines on Inclusive Language and Images in Scholarly Communications. (2022) The Coalition for Diversity & Inclusion in Scholarly Communications. Retrieved from <https://c4disc.pubpub.org/guidelines-on-inclusive-language-and-images-in-scholarly-communication>

^{iv} Thanks to Arlene Stinson of the Center for Inclusion, Transition, and Accessibility at Mercer County Community College for her contribution of these resources.