

Scan of Local Nursing Workforce Training Programs in North Carolina

Request for Services

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation (Blue Cross NC Foundation or Foundation) is launching a [new body of work focused on increasing access to care](#) by supporting the development of a robust and diverse health care workforce. The Foundation seeks to engage a partner to complete a scan and inventory of local (such as within a community college or health care organization's service area) nursing workforce training programs in North Carolina, to better understand opportunities and barriers associated with these programs. The Foundation is specifically interested in programs at community colleges and their partnerships with local health care employers.

Release Date: Thursday, September 22, 2022

Responses Due: By 5 p.m. on Monday, October 31, 2022

Response Format: Submit via online [application portal](#)

Contact: **Katie Eyes**
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***Note:** Pre-submission inquiries regarding this opportunity may be addressed via email to the contact above by October 10. Responses to questions will be posted on our website no later than 5:00 PM on October 17.

Background

For the purposes of this work, “local” refers to programs that identify and respond to specific local health care workforce needs by recruiting and training job candidates locally or regionally. These programs often leverage the resources of potential employers and educational institutions or training programs to build knowledge and relevant job skills and ultimately a pathway to employment. Both training models that support workforce flexibility and career ladders in response to an evolving health care landscape and programs for new workforce entrants are of interest for this scan.

Description of Services Requested

Conduct an inventory and analysis of local efforts in North Carolina to address local workforce needs related to nursing. The product of this work should include a specific, but not exclusive, focus on the training programs at the 58 community colleges (particularly in the context of their partnerships with local health care employers and any other conditions specific to the community) and identify factors that increase and limit capacity of these programs, improve community-based training experience in these roles, and ultimately address local workforce needs.

The inventory and deliverables will inform the Foundation’s and others’ future efforts to develop and spread workforce training models to meet the health care needs of the people of North Carolina.

Key Deliverables/Project Scope

Over the course of this engagement, the consultant will work closely with Blue Cross NC Foundation staff to refine the key components of the project scope as highlighted below.

Develop Framework, Format, and Implementation Plan for Program Inventory

Establish shared definitions, adjust focus on key roles as necessary, and agree on level of detail and data points necessary to inform the scan/inventory and analysis. This step will promote alignment between the vendor and Foundation staff to identify key data points to collect, further refine the purpose and format of later deliverables, and inform the selection of key informants and potential bright spot candidates. Agree on any timeline changes and a process to verify quotes or program descriptions for external facing communication to accurately reflect the perspective and context of any informants.

Inventory/Environmental Scan

Identify existing local training programs including, but not limited to, partnerships between North Carolina’s 58 community colleges and health care employers to address local or statewide health care workforce gaps.

Potential areas of interest include:

- data sources that drive decision making about new program offerings.
- role of any health care employers/facilities in supporting these programs [in-kind, financial, instructional, etc.].
- candidate profile - new workforce entrant or enhanced training [e.g., LPN to RN].
- degree or credential offered.
- length of time program has been offered.
- in-person and on-line components of the program.
- number and sources of funding for faculty.
- program capacity and geographic reach.
- student recruitment metrics [are all available student slots filled? Is there a waitlist?].
- student retention and employment of graduates [including as available, time to first job length of time in position/ turnover, funding source for positions career development/potential career ladders].

- student and faculty racial/ ethnicity demographics [do they reflect the local community?].
- location and scope of institutional and community-based training opportunities.
- in-kind and financial contributions from health systems or other health care employers to educational programs.
- best practice/positive deviance characteristics to identify potential program models.
- facilitating factors or barriers related to local community conditions.

This scan will likely require both key informant interviews (with a mix of faculty/staff, employers, and students/recent graduates as well as a small number of researchers from other states) as well as web-based research and literature review.

The inventory should inform an analysis of facilitating factors, barriers, and opportunities to catalyze and implement local nursing workforce training approaches that will appear in the issue brief described below.

Issue Brief (external)

Drawing from the inventory/scan and key informant interviews, the consultant will document key findings (including a brief inventory of all identified programs) and describe bright spots among program models, key similarities and differences, facilitating factors, barriers, and opportunities. The brief should also highlight equity considerations noting whether, and to what extent, these approaches contribute to greater equity in employment opportunities or other factors. Key initial audiences will be the Blue Cross NC Foundation and others interested in developing similar programs.

Desired Skills, Qualities, and Attributes

Selection criteria and overall desired skills, qualities, and attributes of a consultant for this project are highlighted below: (illustrative not exhaustive)

- Ability to communicate openly and authentically.
- Demonstrated ability to collect, organize, and share data in a meaningful way.
- Experience in capturing points of view and nuances in approaches through interviewing and analysis skills that promote clear identification of similarities and differences.
- Experience in analyzing and synthesizing information that is complex into language and visuals that can be easily understood and shared.
- Experience analyzing and describing equity implications across a broad spectrum of activities and issues to a diverse range of audiences.
- Rapport with and knowledge of networks and key stakeholder groups in North Carolina (and potentially other states) including students enrolled in these programs, health care providers, employers, and/or community colleges.

Our Foundation places a high value on diversity in vendor selection. We strongly encourage Latino, Black, and other consultants of color to apply for this opportunity.

Anticipated Budget and Timeline

Budget range is \$100,000-\$150,000 and this work is anticipated to take place over an eight-month period, starting in November 2022 and concluding by July 30, 2023. Note: this figure does not include reimbursement for variable expenses supporting participation by key informants as noted in the budget section of the proposal requirements below.

Key Activity	Date
Request for Services Released	September 22, 2022
Applicant Questions Due	October 10, 2022
Responses to Applicant Questions Posted	October 17, 2022
Proposals Due	October 31, 2022, 5 p.m.
Selection Decision	By November 21, 2022
Contract Start	By January 3, 2023
Contract Close	By July 30, 2023

Proposal Requirements:

Please submit your proposal in one file (Adobe PDF format preferred) via the [Blue Cross NC Foundation Portal](#) no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 31. Your proposal narrative should not exceed four pages, plus bios and budget.

Basic organizational information and **two references** will also be collected through the portal. References should be individuals outside your organization with whom your team has worked, and who can comment on your organization’s skills, experience, and work style.

Please include the following materials in your proposal:

1. **Proposal narrative** (Limited to four pages)

Please address the following:

- Describe your proposed process and approach to this work.
- Detail the parameters or definitions you would suggest for focusing the inventory and scan.
- Outline the assumptions, limitations, or potential adjustments you anticipate based on the approach described.
- Describe your plan for incorporating racial equity into your analysis.
- Describe how you would approach or integrate factors related to community context into the scan and your analysis.
- Include a proposed workplan and timeline including key activities and deliverables with a priority for keeping Foundation staff engaged as a thought partner in the work.
- Describe unique capabilities, services, or insights you would bring to the work.
- Provide examples of similar work completed.

2. **Budget** (Not included in page limit)

- Include a budget based on your high-level work plan that demonstrates how you would allocate this budget among the suggested components.

Note: It is the Foundation’s expectation that, to the extent allowed by their employers, participation in interviews will be compensated. Due to the unknown details on number of participants or time commitment, this part of the cost will be considered a variable portion of the contract and will be

discussed with the Foundation at the time of final contracting. Please include a variable component in your budget estimating the number of hours to cover participation by key informants throughout the contract.

3. **Brief bio(s)** for the project lead and any key staff. (Not included in page limit)

Proposal Review & Evaluation

Proposals will be reviewed based on the skills and experience required for this work. We anticipate a decision by November 21.

Assumptions

The Blue Cross NC Foundation is not liable for costs incurred by any firm or individual associated with the preparation of a response to this Request for Services.

About the Foundation

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation is a private, charitable foundation established as an independent entity by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina in 2000. Over the past two decades, the organization has worked with - and supported - nonprofit organizations, government entities, and community partnerships across the state, investing \$190 million into North Carolina through nearly 1,300 grants. Within its focus areas of access to care, early childhood, healthy communities, healthy food, and oral health, the Foundation strives to address the key drivers of health, taking a flexible approach designed to meet identified needs in partnership with the community. Learn more at bcbsncfoundation.org.