

**APPROVED
FEBRUARY 5, 2013**

Item #IV-13
February 5, 2013

**NURSING SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2013 AWARDS**

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: This item presents a recommendation for five institutions to receive grant awards under the Nursing School Grant Program administered by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The goal of this program is to increase the number of nurses graduating from Illinois institutions of higher learning who are prepared for careers as registered nurses.

This grant program is tied to Goal 3 of the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success*, increase the number of high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy. Nursing continues to be a high-demand field where the annual supply of newly licensed registered nurses continues to be lower than the demand. This grant program provides institutions with financial assistance directed to expand their capacity or improve student performance to help meet the statewide demand for registered nurses.

Action Requested: That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approves the Fiscal Year 2013 awards totaling \$425,000 for two Expansion Grants and three Improvement Grants under the Nursing School Grant Program.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**NURSING SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2013 AWARDS**

The 2013 awards will mark the seventh year of the Illinois Nursing School Grant Program. During the past six years the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) has awarded approximately \$6.2 million of nursing school grants to 23 nursing programs in Illinois. These programs were located at two public universities, eight community colleges, and 13 private not-for-profit institutions.

Eligible Institutions

Participation in this program is open to Illinois institutions of higher learning offering associate and baccalaureate level registered nursing degree programs. All institutions that participate in this grant program must meet specific eligibility requirements based on the type of degree program offered:

- Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) must be approved by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR); be accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC); and have an articulation agreement in place with at least one institution of higher learning that offers a baccalaureate degree in nursing.
- Baccalaureate (BSN) programs must be approved by IDFPR and be accredited by either the NLNAC or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).
- Baccalaureate completion (RN-BSN) programs must be accredited by the NLNAC or the CCNE.

Two Types of Grants

This program provides for two types of competitive grants - Expansion Grants and Improvement Grants.

Expansion Grants are designed for high-performing nursing schools who agree to expand their capacity to increase the number of students preparing for careers as registered nurses. Expansion grants are renewable for up to three years based on sustained program progress and evaluation results. The grant also requires the retention of an external evaluator, one who is jointly agreed to by the institution and the Board staff, to review the activities and report on the grantee's progress.

- FY 2013 Applications: The Expansion Grant Application was posted on the Board web site on September 17, 2012. The Illinois Center for Nursing assisted the Board staff with notifying the nursing schools about the grant program and application.
- FY 2013 Eligibility: The ADN and BSN programs must have licensure pass rates for first-time test-takers that is equal to or greater than 88 percent and a program attrition rate that is equal to or less than 15 percent. The RN-BSN completion programs must have a program attrition rate that is equal to or less than 15 percent.

- Uses: Expansion grant funds may be used to hire additional nursing faculty; develop or expand instructional programs; develop or expand academic support services; increase classroom space and clinical space; improve existing classroom space; purchase equipment and instructional materials; and conduct requisite program audits and evaluations.
- Evaluation Criteria: Applications are evaluated based on the proposed strategies to increase the number of nurses while maintaining the quality of instruction, student retention, and licensure examination pass rates; proposed budget; proposed evaluation by external evaluator; evidence of institutional support and sustainability; and performance measures, i.e., retention rates, job placement rates, and number of degrees conferred.

Improvement Grants are designed to support lower-performing nursing schools by providing financial assistance to make improvements aimed at increasing student retention and improving licensure examination pass rates. Grants are awarded on an annual basis. An in-house program evaluation focused on measuring progress in meeting objectives and outcomes is required at the end of the grant period.

- FY 2013 Applications: Improvement Grant Applications were posted on the Board web site on September 17, 2012. The Illinois Center for Nursing assisted the Board staff with notifying the nursing schools about the grant program and application.
- FY 2013 Eligibility: The ADN and BSN programs must have licensure pass rates for first-time test-takers that are less than 88 percent or program attrition rates that are greater than 15 percent. The RN-BSN completion programs must have a program attrition rate that is greater than 15 percent.
- Uses: Grant funds may be used to develop or expand instructional programs; develop or expand academic support services; improve existing classroom space; purchase equipment and instructional materials; and conduct requisite program audit.
- Evaluation Criteria: Applications are evaluated based upon the proposed strategies to improve the quality of instruction, increase student retention and increase licensure examination pass rates; proposed budget; proposed evaluation; evidence of institutional support and sustainability; and performance measures, i.e., retention rates, job placement rates, and number of degrees conferred.

Recommended Awards

In the fall of 2013 the Board received 10 applications for the FY 2013 Nursing School Grant Program, six Expansion Grants and four Improvement Grants. An out-of-state nursing grant evaluator was selected to independently examine each application and make recommendations to assist Board staff in developing award recommendations.

The staff recommendation is to award two Expansion Grants and three Improvement Grant projects from the \$425,000 appropriation for the Nursing School Grant Program. Shown below are the institutions recommended for funding, the amounts of recommended funding, and a brief description of the proposal.

Expansion Grants

Harry S Truman College, Chicago (\$138,880). The community college will use the grant funds to build on the previous Nursing School Expansion project award. Truman received grant funding in fiscal years 2007, 2008, and 2009 to expand the ADN program capacity by adding a

new evening/weekend option for an additional 80 students, thus doubling their capacity. Truman has sustained the evening/weekend option over the past three years without additional grant funds. Graduates of Truman's ADN program continue to pass the national licensure examination at rates higher than the national and state averages (100% in 2009, 95% in 2010 and 92% in 2011) and the student attrition rate is less than 15 percent. Truman College continues to be eligible for an Expansion Grant pursuant to IBHE's administrative rules.

Expanding enrollment by admitting new students to the first year of Truman's program is not feasible. However, expanding the program by enrolling LPNs who qualify to enroll as second year students is feasible since this requires fewer additional faculty and no additional facilities. The project will leverage the work done by the Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center/Wright College, along with its partners – the National Council of La Raza and Instituto Progreso Latino – to create an academic and career ladder in healthcare for motivated learners. Students move through the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), phlebotomy, and EKG certifications to the LPN program, and take additional college courses before entering an ADN program.

This grant will enable those who complete the licensed practical nurse (LPN) program at the Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center to apply for admission to the Truman nursing program. These students will participate in bridging activities designed to support successful entry to the nursing program, complete the second year at Truman College with supplemental instruction, and be ready to take the licensure exam for registered nurses. The project will increase the capacity of Truman's nursing program by 30 students over a two-year period, 15 in the first year and an additional 15 in the second year.

Truman will use grant funds to hire additional faculty and tutor/mentors, purchase new equipment for the simulation lab, and provide training for new and existing faculty on simulation and supplemental instruction. The Truman Nursing Program Expansion Project Planning Team, which consists of nursing administrators and faculty from the colleges and the vocational education center, will oversee implementation and an external evaluator will provide annual updates on the progress. Truman intends to apply for a renewal grant in FY14.

Western Illinois University (WIU), Macomb & Quad Cities (\$175,254). The public university will use the grant funds to move 13 courses of the RN-BSN program to an online format. This will allow the school to accommodate additional registered nurses who want to pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing. These students are generally adult learners who have full time employment in nursing thus making it difficult to attend on-campus classes.

WIU's School of Nursing currently offers the RN-BSN completion program on the Macomb campus as well as the Quad Cities campus. The program consists of 65 credits and is currently delivered in a face-to-face hybrid method. There are a few components of some courses online but students consistently report the need for online education. WIU plans to transfer the 13 courses that compose the major in nursing (or 35 of the 65 credits) to an online format to accommodate more students. General education and nursing support courses are either transferred from state approved programs of higher education or taken at WIU.

The university intends to hire a team of consultants to assist and teach faculty to design and load the online courses. This team works with the content experts to analyze audience needs, content, and performance expectations. They will also establish appropriate content sequence and the instructional strategies and bring the content to life with graphics, photographs, audio, music, video, animation, web design, and simulations. WIU expects to increase the capacity to

40 students. The external evaluator will review the online courses and the program expansion. WIU does not intend to apply for a renewal in FY 14, this will be a one-time grant.

Improvement Grants

Illinois Central College, Peoria (\$40,000). The community college will use the grant funds to develop a Test Plan to enhance teaching and enhance faculty assessment methods of student learning. The plan involves implementing the following strategies: 1) develop test writing and test analysis skills; 2) review curriculum and align testing; 3) review core course test questions; 4) rewrite core course test questions; 5) develop peer test review process; 6) initiate test plan; and 7) create test bank database. One of the major activities is to obtain consultation services of a nationally recognized expert in strategies that help students with the nursing licensure exam. The Nursing Program Director formed and chairs the committee that prepared the grant proposal and will oversee the implementation and evaluation of the project.

Kaskaskia College, Centralia (\$31,714). The community college will use the grant funds for activities that will move student performance to above the national average on the licensure exam pursuant to the Strengthening Approaches for Student Testing Success Program. Activities include providing a Student Success Coach who will be responsible for data collection and service as a resource person for students and faculty as they adopt new methods and software; hiring a nationally recognized expert to provide faculty development seminars; and purchasing equipment for grading and analyzing exams along with software and training. The completion of project goals will be evaluated by an internal team of faculty and administrators.

Methodist College, Peoria (\$39,152). The private, not-for-profit college will use the grant funds to improve the pass rates of first time licensure test-takers by continuing the development of the anatomy and physiology lab. The college identified the need to enhance the nursing students' knowledge and skills in the biological sciences as a crucial part of improving the pass rates on the national licensure exam. In the past the nursing students would learn biological and other science concepts at a cooperating institution but the College recently developed and now teaches the general education program. Funds will be used primarily to purchase learning modules for human physiology and advanced biology to conduct experiments and lab research; anatomical models; and computer equipment for data acquisition and analysis of the data. Internal staff will be evaluating the project.

Recommendation

The staff recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Fiscal Year 2013 awards totaling \$425,000 for Expansion and Improvement Grant projects under the Nursing School Grants as detailed in this item and shown in Table 1. The Board also authorizes the Executive Director to make pro rata adjustments to the grant awards in the event that appropriated funds are reduced or unavailable.

Table 1

ILLINOIS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Nursing School Grant Program
FY2013 Staff Recommendation

Nursing School Grant Program	FY2013 Recommended Amount
<i>Expansion Grants</i>	
Harry S Truman College, Chicago	\$ 138,880
Western Illinois University, Macomb & Quad Cities	175,254
	<hr/> \$ 314,134
<i>Improvement Grants</i>	
Illinois Central College, Peoria	\$ 40,000
Kaskaskia College, Centralia	31,714
Methodist College, Peoria	39,152
	<hr/> \$ 110,866
Total	\$ 425,000

