

**APPROVED
DECEMBER 4, 2018**

Item #G-6
December 4, 2018

**NURSING SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2019 AWARDS**

Submitted for:

Action.

Summary:

This item will present a recommendation for seven 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 2019 awards recommended in this item for a total of \$373,900, pursuant to the Nursing School Grant Program.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**NURSING SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2019 AWARDS**

The purpose of the grant program is to increase the number of registered nurses with high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the Illinois economy. Grants are awarded to Illinois institutions of higher education that prepare registered nurses at the associate, baccalaureate, and master entry level. Nursing schools submitted proposals to improve or expand existing nursing programs using strategies that are supported by current research and best practices.

In September 2018, the Board approved emergency rules to improve the effectiveness of this grant program, including the following changes:

- The new structure eliminates the two categories of grants, expansion and improvement, but keeps the intent to award grants that will expand or improve existing nursing programs through a competitive process;
- In lieu of pre-determined maximum amounts for the two grant categories, the amount of the grant proposal must align with the institution's plans to complete the proposal prior to July 1, 2019. Funding to continue a proposal that was previously funded will be given a priority, subject to the strength of the proposal and availability of funding;
- The top priority is to fund baccalaureate completion programs to facilitate student articulation from an associate degree program offered by a community college to a BSN or RN-BSN program at a four-year institution; and
- The Master's Entry Level programs was added to the list of eligible nursing programs.

Eligible Institutions

Participation in this program is open to Illinois institutions of higher learning offering pre-licensure associate, baccalaureate, and master's entry 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 Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) formerly known as the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission; 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 ACEN or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE);
- Baccalaureate completion (RN-BSN) programs must be accredited by the ACEN or the CCNE; and
- Master (MSN Entry) must be approved by IDFPR and be accredited by the ACEN or the CCNE.

Recommended Awards

In the fall of 2018 the Board received 14 applications requesting a total of \$704,075 in Nursing School Grant awards. Unfortunately, the Fiscal Year 2019 appropriation of \$373,900 will meet approximately 53 percent of the amount requested. The evaluation criteria and list of priorities for funding were used during the review of the proposals, pursuant to the rules. Shown below are the recommended recipients, the proposed grant award, and a summary of the proposed activities for your consideration.

The top priority for funding is to provide more opportunities for community college students to access four-year baccalaureate programs that will meet the needs of the workforce. Listed below are staff recommendations for the top priority (in alphabetical order by institution name):

Illinois State University, Mennonite College of Nursing (MCN), (\$98,705). The funds will be used for a short-term, intensive project that will serve as a catalyst for ongoing program development. During the next six months, MCN will be developing two new partnerships with regional community colleges, enhancing three current partnerships, and maintaining a new partnership that started in fall of 2018. A student advisor from MCN will visit the six partner campuses and coordinate student campus visits to build relationships and rapport. This project will involve a significant amount of face to face time with current and future partners. MCN will meet with these partners to mutually establish dual curricula, to navigate how students will seamlessly move into the dual enrollment program, and to talk about how faculty and staff from both programs work together on financial aid and other student concerns.

Three regional meetings with the partners will serve as both educational sessions and as formative and summative evaluations of the project. Participants include four faculty and/or staff from each of the six partners. Sub grants will be awarded to each partner to facilitate attendance and participation without extra cost to the institutions. Four of the six partners are Heartland Community College, Illinois Central College, Joliet Junior College, and Parkland College. Two additional partners will be invited upon Board approval of this grant award.

In addition, MCN staff will establish a statewide database of academic progression programs using data collected by the American Nurses Association in Illinois. This database will provide Illinois nurses, schools of nursing, administrators, and legislators a way to track and understand baccalaureate nursing education in Illinois.

Kishwaukee College, (\$22,040). The community college will use the grant funds to hire an academic progression specialist. The specialist will (1) develop a plan for expansion of the enrollment and targeted retention efforts in the RN-BSN dual enrollment program with Northern Illinois University (NIU); (2) develop a plan for academic progression with each nursing student; (3) work collaboratively with nursing faculty and nursing students to provide retention services to at-risk students; and (4) maintain retention reports and update the current retention plan to include targeted measures for the NIU/Kishwaukee College RN-BSN dual enrolled students.

Millikin University, (\$36,980). The private university will use the grant funds to finalize a dual admission agreement to facilitate articulation of students from Richland Community College to Millikin's RN-BSN program. Funds will be used to provide

course release time for faculty and travel expenses. In addition, funds will be used to provide the faculty with updated online software, equipment, and training to enhance the online RN-BSN program. The enhancements are focused on creating a better sense of community among online learners, helping faculty to meet the varied learning styles of the students, and ensuring online faculty are accessible and available to students.

Northern Illinois University (NIU), (\$110,185). The public university will focus on three areas of concentration, i.e., outreach, engagement, and quality. NIU will work with community colleges and health care systems to build enhanced capacity for student enrollment on three of NIU's current articulation agreements that can be advanced to dual enrollment agreements with neighboring community colleges. The three ADN programs are at Kishwaukee College, William Rainey Harper College, and Rock Valley Community College. In addition, NIU will reach out to a group of potential rural partners that includes four targeted rural community colleges and their eight respective health care delivery partners. NIU will bring these entities together for roundtable meetings to share common concerns, share ideas for partnership and be part of the planning process for building a dual enrollment articulation program that is flexible, comprehensive, and attractive to students. The goals are to increase enrollment by 30 students and to enter into engagement agreements with at least three new community colleges within six months.

The second area of concentration is to enhance faculty and student engagement by building a new sustainable online platform. This will include an online orientation program that replicates face to face learning, including faculty and colleague introductions and relationship building. In addition, the platform will include a series of video presentations designed to promote engagement and student success.

The third area of concentration is program quality to enhance student outcomes. Ten RN-BSN faculty will complete a faculty centered peer-review process program designed to certify the quality of the online courses and online components. The faculty members will serve as course leaders and coaches to ensure the presentation of high quality online programs that will enhance student outcomes.

William Rainey Harper College (Harper College), (\$22,040). The community college will use the grant award to facilitate student articulation by hiring a part-time nursing program transition advisor. The advisor will (1) meet with each student to assist in developing long-term academic and career goals; (2) work with the Fast Track program staff to develop accelerated opportunities for completing general education requirements for matriculation; (3) work with students to identify courses that must be completed for transfer to their selected program; and (4) work with the Institutional Research staff to gather, analyze, and report data.

The second priority is to provide funding that will continue and build on prior year grant award activities. Only one application met this requirement.

Kaskaskia College (KC), (\$48,950). The community college will use the grant funds to build on the progress of last year's goal to incorporate human patient simulation in all nursing courses. The goals for this year are to create high risk, complex simulations to supplement experiences in clinical and to use simulation exercises for remediation.

KC will use this grant award to purchase additional simulation equipment, supplies, and kits to help students with mastering clinical content. Selected faculty members will receive stipends to develop simulation scenarios for high risk, low incidence situations witnessed in rural hospitals so that students may be trained on clinical scenarios they are unlikely to witness in area hospitals. In addition, the project coordinator and simulation technician will assist the faculty with the simulation scenarios and remedial skills labs for students.

The third priority is new grants that will improve student performance or expand high-quality programs. This fall, IBHE received requests for \$334,537 in new grants. Unfortunately, there is an insufficient amount of funds to fulfill all of the requests. For this reason, only one of the eight requests is recommended for funding.

Lakeview College of Nursing (LCN), (\$35,000). The private university will use the grant funds to help address the low pass-rates on the national licensure exams for registered nurses, i.e., NCLEX-RN. In response to the on-going low pass-rates, the faculty identified areas for improvement and implemented quality improvement efforts. The one area that remains a concern is teaching effectiveness due to a reliance on novice educators which is attributed to the faculty shortage. In fall 2018, more than half of the LCN faculty had less than one of teaching experience. While passionate about teaching, the new faculty lack knowledge of and practice with student-centered teaching strategies.

Funds will be used for a peer-driven effort to strengthen classroom and clinical teaching and foster a sense of community around teaching excellence. Five faculty members will be selected to attend at least one conference about teaching and student learning and also prepare for the Certified Nurse Educator exam within the next six months. These faculty members, to be designated as the 2019 Champions of Teaching Excellence, will provide in-house workshops to share their knowledge with their peers and strengthen their skills. LCN plans to incorporate this program into the annual professional development plans.

Recommendation

The staff recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Fiscal Year 2019 awards totaling \$373,900 for seven projects pursuant to the Nursing School Grants Program as detailed in this item. The Board authorizes the Executive Director to prorate the awards if the amount of funds appropriated is reduced.