

APPROVED
SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

Item #H-2
September 10, 2019

NURSING SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2020 AWARDS

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: This item requests approval for the Interim Executive Director to determine the institutions to receive grant awards under the Nursing School Grant Program. 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 authorizes the Interim Executive Director to distribute grant awards to eligible applicants for the Nursing School Grants, pursuant to the Nursing School Grant Program statute and rules.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**NURSING SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2020**

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 will submit proposals to improve or expand existing nursing programs using strategies that are supported by current research and best practices.

In June 2019, the program rules were amended to improve the effectiveness of the program. This includes the following changes:

- A 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 proposed award must align with the institution's plans to complete the proposal prior to the end of the fiscal year;
- A new 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
- Add the Master's Entry Level programs to the list of eligible nursing programs.

Eligible Institutions

Participation is open to Illinois institutions of higher learning offering pre-licensure associate, baccalaureate, and master's entry level registered professional nursing degree programs. However, all institutions that participate in this competitive 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); 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.

Process

The grant application was released to the nursing schools on July 16, 2019 and will close at the end of this month (September 30, 2019). The dates are earlier than last year's release and close dates. This additional time will allow IBHE to get grant agreements signed earlier in the fiscal year which gives the grantees more time to complete all their proposed tasks and meet their objectives. More time will also be beneficial if there are delays in the release of grant funds to the nursing schools.

Pursuant to the statute and rules, the proposals will be evaluated, scored, and ranked by the priorities for funding. The top priority is to provide more opportunities for community college students to access four-year baccalaureate programs that will meet the needs of the workforce. The second priority is to provide funding that will continue and build on prior year grant award activities. The third priority is new grants that will improve student performance or expand high-quality programs.

The funding amounts requested may be adjusted, in consultation with the nursing school, if the total amount does not match the appropriation of state funds. Details on the proposals and grantee awards will be provided to the Board at the December 10, 2019 meeting.

Recommendation

The staff recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby authorizes the Interim Executive Director to allocate the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriation of \$373,900 for the Nursing School Grants as specified by statute and administrative rule. The Board authorizes the Interim Executive Director to:

- 1) Determine eligibility of institutions pursuant to statute (110 ILCS 205/9.31) and the rules implementing the statute (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1100);*
- 2) Evaluate, score, and rank proposals by program priorities;*
- 3) Select the proposals for funding and adjust the awards if the total amount of the funds requested does not equal the funds appropriated;*
- 4) Distribute grant awards to eligible nursing schools; and*
- 5) Provide the Board with the details of the proposals selected for funding and the award amounts at the next Board meeting.*