

**APPROVED**

**January 22, 2025**

*Melissa Bealon*

Board Secretary Melissa Bealon

Item #H-3  
January 22, 2025

**FISCAL YEAR 2025 NURSE EDUCATOR FELLOWSHIPS**

**Submitted for:** Information.

**Summary:** This informational item will update the Board on the first round of fellows selected for the Fiscal Year 2025 Nurse Educator Fellowship Program.

**Action Requested:** None.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**FISCAL YEAR 2025 NURSE EDUCATOR FELLOWSHIPS  
ROUND ONE AWARDS**

The Nurse Educator Fellowship program is designed to retain well-qualified nursing faculty at public and private institutions of higher education in Illinois that award degrees leading to initial licensure as a Registered Nurse. Demand for professionals in healthcare settings, and specifically nurses with advanced degrees and credentials, means that colleges and universities face stiff competition in retaining Nursing faculty in the current labor market. This is especially true considering the impact of the pandemic on the profession and the demographics of the profession related to age and retirements.

The Nurse Educator Fellowship addresses the faculty-retention challenge and advances Equity Strategy 3 of “A Thriving Illinois”, to increase and retain a diverse faculty and staff of color as well as support the learning and success of underserved student populations in higher education. As part of the process of reviewing applications for the fellowship, consideration was given for the proportion of nursing students who are African American, Latinx, low-income, first-generation, from rural communities, working adults, or students with disabilities and the institution’s success in reducing equity gaps in nursing student enrollment and graduation. The program also supports the Growth goal to align the state’s higher education programs with employer needs and the needs of individuals to advance their professional skills. Nurse educators current in their profession are crucial for maintaining higher education programs that prepare future nurses for a wide range of healthcare settings in the state.

Fellows are selected through a competitive process based upon review of nomination materials and a personal statement. Applicants must describe how they will use fellowships funds to support their own professional learning, scholarship, or other endeavors as nurse educators to improve the preparation of future nurses. Fellows conclude the program with a presentation and discussion with the Advisory Board members of the Illinois Nursing Workforce Center. A final report is also due that describes their fellowship experience. The IBHE incorporates equity in the application process by providing additional consideration to applicants teaching in institutions that enroll higher percentages of students who have been traditionally underserved, as well as advancing equity in their programs through a variety of student support initiatives.

For Fiscal Year 2025, we will conduct two rounds of accepting and reviewing applications for the Nurse Educator Fellowships to allow greater access to this opportunity for professional development and retention. For this first round launched in early fall 2024, 43 eligible applications were received. Upon review, it was determined that 3 applicants were ineligible. As a result, there are currently 40 fellowships awarded across 28 nursing schools in the state. The second round of accepting applications for the Fellowship has been launched this month. There are 40 additional fellowships available for the second round of applications.

At the June 26, 2024, Board meeting, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) authorized the Executive Director to:

- 1) *Notify eligible institutions when a state appropriation has been made;*
- 2) *Determine eligibility of nursing schools and nominees; evaluate, score, and rank nominees; and select nominees for funding, pursuant to statute (110 ILCS 205/9.32) and the rules implementing the statute (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1105);*
- 3) *Distribute awards to nursing schools on behalf of fellows; and*
- 4) *Provide the Board with the list of nurse educators selected for funding and their nominating institutions.*

Listed below are the names of the Fellows along with the nominating institutions.

### **Fiscal Year 2025 Nurse Educator Fellows – Round One**

<b>Fellow First Name</b>	<b>Fellow Last Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>
Julie	Ellis-Nelson	Aurora University
Kelvita	Raggs	Chamberlain University, Addison
Karen	Gutsmiedl	Chamberlain University, Addison
Jamie	Lopez	Chamberlain University, Chicago
Amanda	Dirnberger	DePaul University
Jennifer	Sandoval	DePaul University
Jacqueline	Dalke	Elgin Community College
Sara	De Paul	Elmhurst University
Kristen	Crow	Illinois State University
Amanda	Hopkins	Illinois Wesleyan University
Sumar	McDonald	John A. Logan College
Christina	Sosnowski	Kankakee Community College
Lisa	Barrow	Kaskaskia College
Kimberly	Storm	Kaskaskia College
Nichole	Macon	Kaskaskia College
Lara	Lash	Lake Land College
Renea	McKeown	Lewis University
Donna	Martin	Lewis University
Travis	Rath	Lincoln Land Community College
Leah	McClellan	Loyola University
Lovelle	Reynolds	Malcolm X College
Ellen	Boushell	Methodist College of Nursing
Hayley	Schwindenhammer	Methodist College of Nursing
Lindey	Wilson	Methodist College of Nursing
Leona	Lilly	Moraine Valley Community College
Amy	Green	Morton College

Elizabeth	Moxley	Northern Illinois University
Suzanne	Mullis	Northern Illinois University
Amanda	LaMonica-Weier	Rush University
Erin	Miller	Rush University
Sessaly	Davis	Southeastern Illinois College
Heather	Brown	Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Erica	Blumenstock	Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Carol	Swank	St. Francis Medical Center College of Nursing
Megan	Frye	St. Francis Medical Center College of Nursing
Yuri	Guzman	Trinity Christian College
Afrodita	Salievska	University of Illinois Chicago
Susan	Tracy	University of Illinois Chicago
Katherine	Hodur	Waubonsee Community College
Leesa	Thompson	Western Illinois University