

**Nursing Career Ladder:
Accelerated Licensed Practical Nurse Training Program (LPN)
A Program of the Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) and the Department of
Education (DOE)**

PROGRAM REVIEW SUMMARY

This overview of the Nursing Career Ladder: Accelerated Licensed Practical Nurse Training Program (LPN) is based on a program review conducted by Westat/Metis staff for the evaluation of the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) initiatives. The data were collected between June and July 2008 through interviews conducted by Westat and Metis staff with staff of the CEO, the director and staff at the Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) and the New York City (NYC) Department of Education (DOE), and the director and faculty of the CEO LPN program and a review of program documents and monthly data reports and management reports to CEO from HHC and DOE through May 2008.

Sponsoring Agencies: Health and Hospital Corporation and New York City Department of Education

Provider Agencies: HHC and DOE

Start Date: Recruitment and preparation began in February 2007, and classes began in September 2007.

CEO Budget: Approximately \$1 million annually

Target Population: The program is intended annually to serve 40 students (30 poor and low-income New Yorkers and 10 HHC workers) who aspire to become Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). The program began in 2007-2008, and will serve a total of 160 students by 2011. Six HHC workers met the admission criteria for the 2008-2009 program, and 34 poor and low-income New Yorkers will be admitted to the program in 2008.

Statement of Need: Limited seats available in nursing programs fail to produce enough qualified nurses to meet the demand for nurses. Current nursing programs are academically competitive, and income is not a major factor for admissions.¹

Goal and Services: The goal of the program is to help low-income individuals obtain LPN certification in a field that is projected to offer good wages and future growth. Up to 40 participating students receive a total of 1,152 hours of instruction during an 11-month period. The program includes a mix of classroom instruction and clinical rotations at the Coler-Goldwater Specialty Hospital and Nursing Facility.

Eligibility Criteria: Eligibility for the 30 poor and low-income students is based on Federal poverty guidelines (i.e., below 130% of the Federal poverty levels). The participating HHC workers need not meet the income eligibility requirements. All students (including the HHC employees) must be legally authorized to work in the United States, reside in NYC, have a reading level of at least 11.0 (grade equivalent) and a math level of at least 10.5 on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), and achieve at the 40th percentile or above on the Center for Nursing Education Test (CNET). Participants must satisfy criminal background checks and drug screening requirements before they are issued a license. The current cohort of students meets these requirements.

¹ Center for Economic Opportunity (December 2007), *Strategy and Implementation Report*. New York: Center for Economic Opportunity, p. 71.

Targets/Outcomes: The program’s key targets are for (1) all enrolled students to graduate and become certified LPNs, (2) the students to fulfill a 22-month work commitment to HHC, and (3) a second cohort of 40 to begin the program by September 2008. Target and actual numbers are presented in Table 1, as well as the percentage of each target obtained as of June 2008. Other long-term targets for this program include reducing the use of overtime and agency staff at HHC hospitals, improving the career ladder within the health industry, and developing a scalable model to address the significant nursing shortage in the City, HHC hospitals, and the country.

Table 1. LPN’s Target Numbers, Actual Numbers, and Percent of Target Met

Category	Target Numbers	Actual Numbers	Percent of Target Met
Number of students who enrolled in the program	40	39 ^a	98%
Number of enrolled students who graduated from the program	39 (all enrolled students are expected to graduate)	39	100%
Number of students who pass the New York State Board exam and obtain certification	39 (all students who graduate are expected to pass the New York State Board exam and obtain certification)	Not available until fall 2008	Not available until fall 2008
Number of students who are placed in employment as LPNs:^b At Goldwater Hospital At Gouverneur Long Term Care Facility Waiting for placement at other facilities	30 ^c	19 5 5	96%
Number of students who enrolled in prep program	60	60	100%
Number of students who successfully completed the prep program	6 out of 60 students ^d	15	250%

^aOne student enrolled but was unable to start the program.

^bOne student will not be hired due to immigration issues.

^cThe nine HHC students go back to their previous positions and will be promoted to LPN positions after they pass the Board exam.

^dThe HHC director indicated that the expectation was that at least 10 percent of the 60 students would successfully complete the prep program and be enrolled in the CEO LPN program. Having 15 students successfully complete the prep program was a very big achievement for the program.

Selected Key Findings

Fidelity to the Program Model. Interviews with the HHC director and staff, DOE staff, LPN administrators, teachers, and counselor at the CEO LPN program indicate that the program has been implemented with fidelity to the model. The program has recruited and serves the intended target population.

Characteristics of the Clients Served in Comparison to the Target Population. As reported by HHC, 27 of the 30 CEO-sponsored students were at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level when they applied to the LPN program. Three students earned approximately \$2,000 more than the 130 percent of poverty.² All 39 students met all other selection criteria.³

² This small amount over-income is not sufficient to make the students ineligible and is not considered a problem.

³ One student who was recruited to the first cohort had not met the immigration requirements but had been admitted because the recruitment period was very short and time was insufficient to completely screen that applicant prior to admission.

Thirty of the 39 students are female. Five students are ages 21 to 24; 30 are ages 25 to 44; and four students are ages 45 to 64. Twenty-two non-HHC students are Black, four are Asian, three are Hispanic, and one is White. Six non-HHC students have a bachelor's degree, three have an associate's degree, 16 have some college, four have a GED, and one has a high school diploma. The race/ethnicity and education background of the nine HHC students is not known. Six of the 39 students live in the borough of Manhattan; nine live in the Bronx; and 12 each live in Brooklyn and Queens.

Service Delivery. The CEO LPN program is different from most traditional LPN training programs because this CEO initiative takes place in a hospital setting. LPN programs usually are based in community colleges or private schools. The students at the CEO LPN program have access to the hospital staff members and are able to interact with them. Additionally, this is an accelerated program (an 11-month program as opposed to a 2-year traditional program). The students receive 242 hours of clinical exposure. Although this program shares the same syllabus as the other two DOE-sponsored LPN programs, the quality of the clinical program differentiates this program from similar training programs because students are able to interact with hospital staff at the Coler-Goldwater hospital and learn from them. A unique feature of the CEO LPN program is that all instructors are Registered Nurses (RNs).

This year (2008) CEO funds helped DOE create an organized evening preparatory program that took place between January and May 2008 in Manhattan and Goldwater for new students who plan to join the LPN program in September 2008. Before this prep program, DOE had conducted a modified version of the current prep program for HHC employees. However, the earlier prep program had not yielded good results. There was a need among students who had passed the CNET but fell short on the TABE to raise their TABE scores in order to be eligible to apply to the LPN program (these participants had to score at least 10.0 instead of 11.0 on TABE reading and 9.5 instead of 10.5 on TABE math). The teachers for this prep program included two staff members from the CEO LPN program, the supervisor of the LPN program, and another teacher from the Manhattan program. The sessions focused on math, reading/language, and employability/responsible behaviors. CEO funding helped meet this need with the prep program.

Provider Capacity. The administrator responsible for the LPN program on a day-to-day basis is the director of nursing, who is assisted by a lead teacher, three other teachers, a staff member in charge of the labs, and a counselor. The staff members feel that they need a social worker working at least part-time with the program because they feel they are not well equipped to help some of the students who experience multiple problems. The director and all the instructors are experienced RNs. The teachers are enthusiastic about the program and are willing to step in for each other if someone is out rather than use substitute staff. It appears as though the program has the capacity to provide the basic supports, facilities, and services the students need. The nursing director and faculty are particularly impressive in their dedication to the program's goals and to the students. Faculty members seem to know the issues students face and they try to provide them with personal attention.

Agency Management. HHC and the Office of Adult and Continuing Education closely monitor the LPN program. The program sends attendance records of the students to HHC. The LPN director has a very hands-on style of management and reviews progress almost daily, fine-tuning the program to address problems and improve the likelihood of meeting program goals. She works closely with HHC staff members who provide the necessary support for the students.

Early Outcomes. The target enrollment was 40 students. Forty students were recruited and 39 enrolled. None of the 39 enrolled students dropped out and all of them graduated on time in June 2008 (100%). These students will sit for the state board exam this fall to obtain their license to practice as LPNs. The HHC students go back to their previous positions until they pass the board exam, at which time their positions will be upgraded to match their qualifications. The 30 non-HHC students had to apply to different HHC facilities – long-term care facilities – to begin work after graduation because only long-term care facilities allow students who have graduated from the LPN program to work as LPNs before they sit for the Board exam to obtain the LPN certification. Of the 30 non-HHC students in the CEO LPN program, the Coler-Goldwater hospital plans to hire 19 of the LPN students. Gouverneur Healthcare Services has hired five students, while five other students are waiting to be placed at other HHC facilities. HHC could not place one student because of his immigration status.

Additionally, by May 2008, 15 of the students who participated in the new prep program had already passed the CNET exam and obtained qualifying reading and math scores on the TABE, making them eligible for acceptance into the September 2008 LPN class. The expectation was that approximately six students who participated in the prep program would meet the eligibility requirements for the CEO LPN program, so the actual number (15) substantially exceeded the target, an important achievement for the program.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As implemented, the LPN program appears to be in alignment with the CEO mission and key CEO eligibility criteria. Data so far indicate that the program is on track to achieving its target goals—all 39 participants graduated, and data from the administration of the state board licensing exams will be available in the fall to determine how many of these graduates will qualify for their LPN licenses.

The Westat/Metis team notes that the program needs at least a part-time social worker. Although the staff members are able to help and direct students to where they can get services, a social worker would be able to deal better with some of the issues the students face. The Westat/Metis team also recommends HHC considering revising the screening process of applicants. HHC screens the applicants to determine their income eligibility (whether they meet the income eligibility criteria) as well as the applicants ability to legally work in the United States before they are admitted to the CEO LPN program. We recommend that HHC review the current screening process to make it more rigorous so that the applicants admitted to the CEO LPN program meet all the eligibility criteria.