

# Nurse Practitioner

## **Professional Activities**

Nurse practitioners (NPs) serve as primary and specialty care providers, providing advanced nursing services to patients and their families. NPs assess patients, determine the best way to improve or manage a patient's health, and discuss ways to integrate health promotion strategies into a patient's life. They typically care for a certain population of people. For instance, NPs may work in adult and geriatric health, pediatric health, or psychiatric and mental health.

Although the scope of their duties varies some by state, many nurse practitioners work independently, prescribe medications and order laboratory tests. All nurse practitioners consult with physicians and other health professionals when needed. Nurse practitioners are also referred to as advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs).

The following are examples of types of APRNs:

- Nurse anesthetists
- Nurse midwives
- Nurse practitioners (NPs)
- Clinical nurse specialists (CNSs)

Advanced practice registered nurses typically do the following:

- Take and record patients' medical histories and symptoms and set up plans for patients' care or contribute to existing plans
- Perform physical exams
- Observe patients and diagnose various health problems
- Perform and order diagnostic tests and analyze results
- Give patients medicines and treatments
- Consult with doctors and other healthcare professionals as needed
- Operate and monitor medical equipment
- Provide counseling and teach patients and their families how to stay healthy or manage their illnesses or injuries
- Conduct research

APRNs work in a variety of settings including physicians' offices, hospitals, nursing care facilities, schools, and clinics. Nurse midwives also work in birthing centers. Some APRNs may treat patients in their patients' homes. APRNs working in physicians' offices or schools typically work during normal business hours. Those working in hospitals and various other healthcare facilities may work in shifts to provide round-the-clock patient care. They may work nights, weekends, and holidays. Some APRNs, especially those who work in critical care or those who deliver babies, may also be on call. APRNs may also travel long distances to help care for patients in places where there are not enough healthcare workers.

## **Educational Requirements**

Most APRN programs prefer candidates who have a bachelor's degree in nursing. However, some schools offer bridge programs for registered nurses with an associate's degree or diploma in nursing. Graduate-level programs are also available for individuals who did not obtain a bachelor's degree in nursing but in a related

health science field. An APRN must become a licensed registered nurse (RN) before pursuing education in one of the advanced practice roles.

Nurse practitioners must earn a master's degree from an accredited program. These programs include both classroom education and clinical experience. Courses in anatomy, physiology, and pharmacology are common as well as coursework specific to the chosen APRN role. Although a master's degree is the most common form of entry-level education, many APRNs choose to earn a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) or a Ph.D. The specific educational requirements and qualifications for each of the roles are available on professional organizations' websites.

### **Licenses, Certifications, and Registrations**

The Consensus Model for APRN Regulation, a document developed by a wide variety of professional nursing organizations, including the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, aims to standardize APRN requirements. The model recommends all APRNs to complete a graduate degree from an accredited program, be a licensed registered nurse, pass a national certification exam, and earn a second license specific to one of the APRN roles and to a certain group of patients.

Certification is required in the vast majority of states to use an APRN title. Certification is used to show proficiency in an APRN role and is often a requirement for state licensure.

The National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) offers the National Certification Examination (NCE). Certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) must recertify every 2 years, which includes 40 hours of continuing education.

The American Midwifery Certification Board offers the Certified Nurse-Midwife and Certified Midwife designations. Individuals with these designations must recertify every 5 years.

There are a number of certification exams for nurse practitioners because of the large number of populations NPs may work with and the number of specialty areas in which they may practice. Certifications are available from a number of professional organizations, including the American Nurses Credentialing Center and the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board.

### **Academic Programs**

[DePaul University](#)

[Governors State University](#)

[Illinois State University](#)

[Lewis University](#)

[Loyola University-Chicago](#)

[Mennonite College of Nursing-Illinois State University](#)

[Millikin University](#)

[North Park University](#)

[Olivet Nazarene University](#)

[Rush University](#)

[Saint Anthony College of Nursing](#)

[Saint Xavier University](#)

[Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville](#)

[St. Francis Medical Center](#)

[University of Illinois at Chicago](#)

[University of St. Francis](#)

### **Employment/Salary Outlook**

Growth will occur because of an increase in the demand for healthcare services. Several factors, including healthcare legislation and the resulting newly insured, an increased emphasis on preventative care, and the

large, aging baby-boom population will contribute to this demand. As states change their laws governing APRN practice authority, APRNs are being allowed to perform more services. They are also becoming more widely recognized by the public as a source for primary healthcare.

### State and National Wages

Location	Pay Period	2021		
		Low	Median	High
United States	Hourly	\$38.21	\$58.02	\$78.54
	Annual	\$79,470	\$120,680	\$163,350
Illinois	Hourly	\$47.09	\$59.11	\$67.89
	Annual	\$97,950	\$122,960	\$141,200

### State and National Trends

United States	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings <sup>1</sup>
	2021	2031		
Nurse Practitioners	246,700	359,400	46%	26,800
Illinois	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings <sup>1</sup>
	2020	2030		
Nurse Practitioners	8,420	12,090	+44%	900

Projected Annual Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

### Professional Organizations

American Nurses Credentialing Center ([nursecredentialing.org](http://nursecredentialing.org))

Pediatric Nursing Certification Board ([pncc.org](http://pncc.org))

### References

*Occupational Outlook Handbook*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics  
[http://www.bls.gov/oooh/healthcare/nurse practitioner](http://www.bls.gov/oooh/healthcare/nurse_practitioner)

O\*NET OnLine ([http://www.onetonline.org/nurse practitioner](http://www.onetonline.org/nurse_practitioner))

CareerOneStop ([http://www.careerinfonet.org/nurse practitioner](http://www.careerinfonet.org/nurse_practitioner))

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