

	Policy Category/Number	NRRF No. 2
POLICY TITLE	Date Approved	February 2012
REGISTERED NURSE, REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSE AND LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE REFRESHER PROGRAM	Applicable to	Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurse and Licensed Practical Nurse
Branch/Division	Next Review Date	February 2012
Workforce Policy & Planning Health Workforce	Review Date	February 2012
Responsible Authority	Date Revised	February 2012
Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund (NRRF) Committee	Page # of #	1 of 5

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Established in 1999, the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund (NRRF) is committed to enhancing the delivery of health services in the province of Manitoba, by addressing issues of nursing supply. Main functions of the NRRF include the development of strategies to assist with the recruitment and retention of Registered Nurses (RN), Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPN), and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) in Manitoba.

To recruit experienced individuals who no longer maintain active registration back into the Manitoba workforce, the NRRF supports the use of funds for enrolment in RN, RPN and LPN Refresher courses.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Nurses constitute approximately 2/3 of health care professionals across Canada. Therefore, nurses play integral roles in promoting and maintaining a system of health which addresses the needs of populations, ensures high quality care, and fosters the support and confidence of the public.

A shortage of qualified nurses has been well substantiated. Subsequently, across the country employers have had increasing difficulty filling positions. To offset issues of inadequate numbers, the majority of governments have initiated strategies for recruitment. One strategy for recruitment is the use of financial compensation to facilitate and encourage individuals who have previously been registered as nurses, to upgrade skills in order to re-enter the profession.

3.0 PURPOSE

- 3.1** To encourage the re-entry of qualified individuals into the Manitoba RN, RPN and LPN workforce.
- 3.2** To provide financial support for experienced individuals previously educated as RNs, RPNs, and LPNs to return to the profession.
- 3.3** To assist eligible Manitoba employers to decrease RN, RPN, and LPN vacancies.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Reimbursement for Refresher Courses:** Financial support for an individual to re-enter the RN, RPN and LPN workforce, contingent upon the completion of approved RN, RPN or LPN Refresher Program.
- 4.2 Refresher Agreement:** A written contract stating the RN's, RPN's or LPN's commitment to repay funds to the NRRF, if they do not successfully complete the Refresher course by the date specified within the contract.
- 4.3 Return of Service Commitment:** A written contract stating the employee's commitment to provide nursing service with an eligible employer in Manitoba for a one year period of time, in return for the investment of the Refresher Course costs by the NRRF.
- 4.4 Approved Refresher Program:** A Refresher program that is recognized by the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM), College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba (CRPNM) or College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba (CLPNM) in preparing individuals for licensure as RNs, RPNs or LPNs in Manitoba. The CRNM has approved the Refresher program at Red River College (RRC), the CRPNM has approved the Refresher program through the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) and the CLPNM has approved the Refresher program through Assiniboine Community College (ACC).
- 4.5 New Student:** An individual who is not currently enrolled in a RN, RPN or LPN Refresher course.
- 4.6 Existing Student:** An individual who is currently enrolled in a RN, RPN or LPN Refresher program.
- 4.7 Completed student:** An individual who has successfully graduated from a RN, RPN or LPN Refresher program.

5.0 POLICY

This policy applies to:

5.1 Eligible Individuals:

- 5.1.1** Individuals who are Manitoba residents and are accepted into an approved RN, RPN or LPN Refresher Program.

5.2 Eligible Employers:

- 5.2.1** Employers receiving public funds from the province of Manitoba. This includes but is not limited to Manitoba Health and the Regional Health Authorities (RHA). Private for profit agencies are not eligible.

6.0 CORE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

6.1 Standards:

6.1.1 Nurses Responsibilities:

- 6.1.1.1** The nurse is responsible for review of the terms and conditions of this policy for the reimbursement of Refresher courses, and upon acceptance, compliance with these terms and conditions.
- 6.1.1.2** The nurse must have registered with an approved Refresher program on or after April 1, 2009.
- 6.1.1.3** The nurse must complete the required education courses.
- 6.1.1.4** The nurse must sign a return of service commitment to begin after successful completion of the Refresher program.

- 6.1.1.5** If the conditions within this policy are not fulfilled by the date specified in the Refresher agreement, the recipient agrees to repay Manitoba Health the amount of the Refresher reimbursement.
- 6.1.1.6** The nurse must submit requests for funding along with the required documentation to the Facilitator of the NRRF.

6.1.2 Employer Responsibilities:

- 6.1.2.1** The employer will be responsible for securing a permanent or term nursing position, at 0.6 EFT or more, filled for a minimum of a one year return of service commitment within their organization.
- 6.1.2.2** The employer will be responsible for providing eligible employees with the information contained within this policy.
- 6.1.2.3** The employer will be responsible for retaining complete records for each employee who receives a reimbursement of Refresher costs from the NRRF.
- 6.1.2.4** The employer will be responsible for notifying the NRRF if the one year service commitment is not fulfilled, by the completion of the Employer Verification of Incomplete Service Agreement Form (Appendix 8.2).

6.1.3 NRRF Responsibilities:

- 6.1.3.1** The Facilitator of the NRRF will review all requests for reimbursement of costs for Refresher courses, and approve applications in accordance with this policy.
- 6.1.3.2** The Facilitator will defer to the NRRF Committee for final approval or denial, if the application is outside of policy guidelines, or based on special circumstances.
- 6.1.3.3** The Facilitator of the NRRF will advise individuals of the status of their application via letter.
- 6.1.3.4** The Facilitator will maintain an account of approvals.
- 6.1.3.5** The NRRF will complete an annual report.
- 6.1.3.6** Annual reports will include:
- Name of organization/RHA
 - Employee professional designation
 - Position filled (minimum 1 year permanent/temporary and EFT)
 - Clinical area
 - Amount of Refresher allowance
 - Repayment received (where applicable)

6.2 Procedures:

- 6.2.1** The NRRF reviews allocations annually for the purposes of supporting individuals who enroll in the Red River College RN Refresher program, the SIAST RPN Refresher program and the ACC LPN Refresher program.
- 6.2.2** The required documentation and requests for funding are to be submitted to the Facilitator of the NRRF using the Application for Financial (Educational) Assistance Form (Appendix 8.1).
- 6.2.3** The Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund will support up to 80% of course costs to a maximum of \$2000 per individual for Refresher course costs or portion thereof. Credit is calculated based on the

formula of 80% of total course costs, which are \$2855. As per Red River College, the cost of tuition is as follows: theory \$1574, clinical \$731, and books and materials \$550.

- 6.2.4** The amount of the Refresher reimbursement will be forgiven after 12 months of nursing service within Manitoba.
- 6.2.5** For Nurses receiving non-repayable funding from outside sources, the amount of funding provided will be deducted from the eligible amount.
- 6.2.6** Non-compliance with the Refresher agreement will necessitate repayment of funds. Reasons include:
 - Academic failure
 - Failure to secure employment within 3 months of program completion
 - Failure to complete 12 consecutive months of employment with an approved employer
 - Failure to pass the Canadian licensing exam.
- 6.2.7** Nurses who have completed Refresher Programs outside of Manitoba, but have registered after April 1, 2009 and have secured a position as a nurse in Manitoba, may apply directly to the Facilitator of the NRRF for reimbursement of 80% of course costs to a maximum of \$2,000. The applicant and their employer must sign a one-year service agreement with the Province of Manitoba.
- 6.2.8** Nurses who have previously failed the RN, RPN or LPN licensing exam may apply for reimbursement of course costs upon the successful completion of the licensing exam, and based on confirmation of registration with the CRNM, CRPNM or CLPNM. Funding for education programs may be provided on a retroactive basis once receipts are provided.
- 6.2.9** Copies of visa documents and/or letters of support from Immigration may be requested for foreign educated individuals, to verify immigration status and the length of time the individual is eligible to remain in Canada.
- 6.2.10** Applicants, who change employers within their one year term of service but maintain their eligibility for reimbursement of RN, RPN or LPN Refresher Program costs, must submit a revised return of service commitment signed by the new employer. The employee must fulfill the remainder of their contract with the new employer.
- 6.2.11** In writing, the NRRF will consider extending the time to complete the 12 month return of service commitment, or grant temporary absences for pregnancy or health related matters.
- 6.2.12** The amount of the reimbursement of RN, RPN or LPN Refresher Program costs will be forgiven after the return of service commitment has been completed.

7.0 GUIDELINES

7.1 New Students:

- 7.1.1** Nurses must apply directly to the Refresher program at RRC, SIAST or ACC.
- 7.1.2** RRC, SIAST or ACC will determine eligibility, and if appropriate with a letter of acceptance, provide the application form for reimbursement of Refresher course costs from the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund.
- 7.1.3** If funding is approved by the NRRF, the student will have 30 days from the date of approval to register for the RN Refresher course at RRC, RPN Refresher course at SIAST or the LPN Refresher course at ACC.
- 7.1.4** The Facilitator of the NRRF will provide RRC, SIAST or ACC with copies of the documentation.

7.1.5 Upon registration at RRC, SIAST or ACC, the nurse will receive credit towards the costs of tuition to a maximum of \$2000.

7.2 Existing Students:

7.2.1 Nurses must have registered (or finalized registration by payment) for the RN, RPN or LPN Refresher Course on or after April 1, 2009.

7.2.2 Nurses may forward the completed Application for Financial (Educational) Assistance Form (Appendix 8.1) and the appropriate documentation to the Facilitator of the NRRF, for review and consideration regarding the reimbursement of Refresher course costs.

7.2.3 Documentation must include receipts detailing total course costs of tuition and books/course materials.

7.2.4 The nurse may be eligible for a refund or credit of 80% of total expenses.

7.2.5 The amount credited to RRC, SIAST or ACC and the amount refunded to the nurse will not exceed 80% of total course costs i.e. $\$2855 \times 80\% = \2284 . The maximum dollar amount of the refund will not exceed \$2000.

7.3 Completed Students:

7.3.1 Nurses must have registered (or finalized registration by payment) for the RN, RPN or LPN Refresher course on or after April 1, 1999.

7.3.2 Nurses must provide evidence of completion the Refresher course.

7.3.3 Nurses may forward the completed Application for Financial (Educational) Assistance Form (Appendix 8.1) and the appropriate documentation to the Facilitator of the NRRF, for review and consideration regarding reimbursement of Refresher course costs.

7.3.4 Documentation must include receipts detailing total course costs of tuition, and evidence of the successful completion of the program.

7.3.5 The amount refunded to the nurse will not exceed 80% of total course costs. The maximum dollar amount of the refund will not exceed \$2000.

8.0 POLICY DOCUMENTS

8.1 Application for Financial (Educational) Assistance Form

8.2 Employer Verification of Incomplete Service Agreement Form