

Recruit and retain with education and certification

By Catherine Spader, RN

What nurses want: More than a paycheck

Nurses in today's rapidly evolving job market are looking for more than a paycheck. They're ambitious and want to build fulfilling, meaningful careers that take them from new grad to retirement. Education and certification are prized as critical elements in their drive to continue to learn and grow, according to a 2019 work-life balance survey conducted by Bright Horizons in partnership with the journal *American Nurse Today*.*

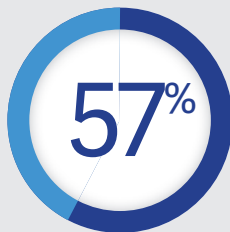


Nurses are looking for professional growth and career advancement

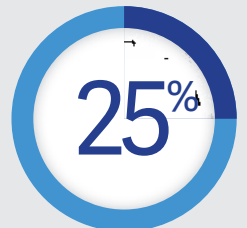
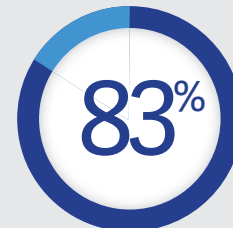
44% of **nurses** plan to **continue** or **are** currently continuing **their education**.

#1 **ADN and BSN nurses'** career path **choice** is an **advanced clinical position**.

Cost is a **barrier** to educational goals for **57%** of **nurses**.



83% would give **preference** to an **employer offering tuition** assistance; **25%** of millennial and Gen X nurses would **accept a job only** if tuition assistance was **offered**.



Financial assistance helps recruit and retain nurses



Nurses were asked what would keep them with their employer for 5 years. Baby boomers, Gen Xers, and millennials all answered the same way: They want to stay with employers who financially support education and certification.

- 65% of nurses would stay at their current job 5 years if their employer covered the cost of their next degree or certification.
- 47% of nurses would stay at their current job for the next 5 years if it paid down their student debt.
- Paying down student debt was significantly more important to millennial and Gen X nurses than baby boomers.

Download three other recruitment and retention tip sheets at americannursetoday.com/nurse-retention-tool-kit/

*The survey was conducted in May 2019 and represents 1,323 nurses. Respondents represent a cross section of employment settings, educational levels, and ages, including baby boomers, Gen Xers, and millennials. Sixty percent work in a hospital, 85% work full-time, and 70% have attained a BSN or higher degree.

Education is a win-win

You can improve the quality of care at your organization by supporting nurses to obtain higher education. According to a 2018 analysis in *Health Affairs*, "...[E]ach 10-percentage-point increase in the hospital share of nurses with a BSN was associated with 24 percent greater odds of surviving to discharge with good cerebral performance among patients who experienced in-hospital cardiac arrest."¹ A 2017 systematic review published in *International Nursing Review* noted, "...Nurses with higher education also embraced professional values as fundamental for quality nursing care practice."²

1. Harrison JM, Aiken LH, Sloane DM, et al. In hospitals with more nurses who have baccalaureate degrees, better outcomes for patients after cardiac arrest. *Health Aff.* 2019;38(7):1087-1094.
2. Sibandze BT, Scafide KN. Among nurses, how does education level impact professional values? A systematic review. *Int Nurs Rev.* 2018;65(1):65-77.



Tips and strategies

Recruit and **retain** career-driven nurses by **providing** what they **want** most for **long-term** career **growth**: **opportunities** to gain knowledge, develop skills, and **grow** in their careers to **fulfill** their **dreams**.

- **Ensure** your human resources department, talent acquisition team, and all managers and staff are aware of education benefits.

- **Develop** or expand clinical ladder programs, which typically include points for staff education efforts.

- **Cover** the cost of specialty certification, including prep courses and test fees, through your tuition program.

- **Offer** college planning support such as financial planning.

- **Develop** flexible scheduling practices that allow nurses to attend classes and study for certification exams.

- **Evaluate** how education benefits meet career needs at different life stages.



"Children's HealthSM in North Texas encourages education and certification by providing a Learning Concierge Service. Through this service, a Learning Advisor connects nurses and other team members to learning opportunities and programs, while supporting the creation of individual development plans. The advisor promotes self-directed professional development in line with Magnet Recognition Program[®] targets including degree programs, specialty certifications, and scholarships."

— W. David Campbell, MSN, RN-BC, Senior Director, Organizational Learning

Catherine Spader is an author and healthcare writer/editor based in Littleton, Colorado.

Download three other recruitment and retention tip sheets at americannursetoday.com/nurse-retention-tool-kit/

This educational resource is brought to you compliments of

