

RCW 18.79.202 License fee surcharge—Use of proceeds—Nursing resource center account—Report to the legislature—Review—Rules. (1)

In addition to the licensing fee for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses licensed under this chapter and for nurses who hold a valid multistate license issued by the state of Washington under chapter 18.80 RCW, the department shall impose an additional surcharge of eight dollars per year on all initial licenses and renewal licenses for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses issued under this chapter. Advanced registered nurse practitioners are only required to pay the surcharge on their registered nurse licenses.

(2) The department, in consultation with the board and the workforce training and education coordinating board, shall use the proceeds from the surcharge imposed under subsection (1) of this section to provide grants to a central nursing resource center. The grants may be awarded only to a not-for-profit central nursing resource center that is comprised of and led by nurses. The central nursing resource center will demonstrate coordination with relevant nursing constituents including professional nursing organizations, groups representing nursing educators, staff nurses, nurse managers or executives, and labor organizations representing nurses. The central nursing resource center shall have as its mission to contribute to the health and wellness of Washington state residents by ensuring that there is an adequate nursing workforce to meet the current and future health care needs of the citizens of the state of Washington. The grants may be used to fund the following activities of the central nursing resource center:

(a) Maintain information on the current and projected supply and demand of nurses through the collection and analysis of data regarding the nursing workforce, including but not limited to education level, race and ethnicity, employment settings, nursing positions, reasons for leaving the nursing profession, and those leaving Washington state to practice elsewhere. This data collection and analysis must complement other state activities to produce data on the nursing workforce and the central nursing resource center shall work collaboratively with other entities in the data collection to ensure coordination and avoid duplication of efforts;

(b) Monitor and validate trends in the applicant pool for programs in nursing. The central nursing resource center must work with nursing leaders to identify approaches to address issues arising related to the trends identified, and collect information on other states' approaches to addressing these issues;

(c) Facilitate partnerships between the nursing community and other health care providers, licensing authority, business and industry, consumers, legislators, and educators to achieve policy consensus, promote diversity within the profession, and enhance nursing career mobility and nursing leadership development;

(d) Evaluate the effectiveness of nursing education and articulation among programs to increase access to nursing education and enhance career mobility, especially for populations that are underrepresented in the nursing profession;

(e) Provide consultation, technical assistance, data, and information related to Washington state and national nursing resources;

(f) Promote strategies to enhance patient safety and quality patient care including encouraging a safe and healthy workplace environment for nurses; and

(g) Educate the public including students in K-12 about opportunities and careers in nursing.

(3) The nursing resource center account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. All receipts from the surcharge in subsection (1) of this section must be deposited in the account. Expenditures from the account may be used only for grants to an organization to conduct the specific activities listed in subsection (2) of this section and to compensate the department for the reasonable costs associated with the collection and distribution of the surcharge and the administration of the grant provided for in subsection (2) of this section. No money from this account may be used by the recipient towards administrative costs of the central nursing resource center not associated with the specific activities listed in subsection (2) of this section. No money from this account may be used by the recipient toward lobbying. Only the secretary or the secretary's designee may authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures. Grants will be awarded on an annual basis and funds will be distributed quarterly. The first distribution after awarding the first grant shall be made no later than six months after July 24, 2005. The central nursing resource center shall report to the department on meeting the grant objectives annually.

(4) The central nursing resource center shall submit a report of all progress, collaboration with other organizations and government entities, and activities conducted by the center to the relevant committees of the legislature by November 30, 2011. The department shall conduct a review of the program to collect funds to support the activities of a nursing resource center and make recommendations on the effectiveness of the program and whether it should continue. The review shall be paid for with funds from the nursing resource center account. The review must be completed by June 30, 2012.

(5) The department may adopt rules as necessary to implement chapter 268, Laws of 2005. [2023 c 123 § 18; 2005 c 268 § 4.]

Short title—2023 c 123: See RCW 18.80.900.

Finding—2005 c 268: "Washington state is experiencing a critical shortage of registered nurses. To safeguard and promote patient safety and quality of care, the legislature finds that a central resource center for the nursing workforce is critical and essential in addressing the nursing shortage and ensuring that the public continue to receive safe, quality care." [2005 c 268 § 1.]