



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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February 1, 2022

TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Higher Educational Aids Board: Section 13.10 Request for Release of Funding for Nurse Educators Program -- Agenda Item V

On January 6, 2021, the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) submitted a request under s. 13.10 of the statutes for release of \$5,000,000 GPR in 2022-23 for a Nurse Educators program.

BACKGROUND

Under 2021 Act 58, \$5,000,000 GPR in 2022-23 is provided in the Joint Committee on Finance supplemental appropriation for release to HEAB upon request and approval by the Committee for a Nurse Educators program. The Act also created a new, continuing appropriation under HEAB for the program, to which funding would be transferred upon release by the Committee. (The Act also requires that costs associated with the program be funded from the same appropriation.) The Act specifies that the nurse educator program would apply to students and graduates of institutions of higher education, defined as private, non-profit colleges located in Wisconsin, colleges within the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), and UW System institutions or campuses. The program is required to provide: (a) fellowships to students who enroll in programs for degrees in doctor of nursing practice, doctor of philosophy in nursing, or master of science in nursing in an institution of higher education; (b) educational loan repayment assistance to recruit and retain faculty for nursing programs in an institution of higher education; and (c) postdoctoral fellowships to recruit faculty for nursing programs in an institution of higher education. Individuals who receive fellowships or loan repayment assistance are required to teach for three consecutive years in a nursing program at an institution of higher education.

In recent years, concern has been expressed about a growing shortage of qualified nurses in Wisconsin and in the country as a whole. As the population ages, demand for nursing and other health care services increases. Enrollment in baccalaureate nursing programs has grown in recent years; by 5.1% in 2019 according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. The increased visibility of the nursing profession during the COVID-19 pandemic may have further contributed to

the recent boost in enrollment. At the same time, many nurses are themselves aging and retiring from the profession, and the number of new nurses entering the field may not be sufficient to both replace those who are retiring and meet increased demand. According to the Wisconsin 2020 registered nurse (RN) workforce survey, 31.9% of current nurses are age 55 and older, and the median age reported for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) in the 2019 LPN workforce survey was 47.7.

The current nursing shortage is reflected in nursing educator programs as well; in fact, nursing educator shortages may contribute to reduced nursing student capacity. The 2018 nurse faculty survey found that lack of funding to hire faculty was identified most often by bachelors of science in nursing (BSN) program administrators as a factor in limiting nursing student admissions. The survey report identified 63 vacant positions for full- and part-time faculty at nursing programs in Wisconsin, and notes that the number of part-time faculty has doubled since 2015. The population of nursing educators is aging, and many educators are nearing retirement; the survey indicates that 47.7% of registered nurses working in nursing education programs are age 51 or older. Addressing a shortage of nursing faculty requires planning in advance because of the time required to earn an advanced degree. A doctoral program typically takes four to seven years to complete, and nurses often practice for a period of time before pursuing graduate education.

According to HEAB, Wisconsin has three institutions that provide a doctorate of nursing program – Marquette University; UW Madison, and UW Milwaukee; nine institutions that provide a doctor of nursing practice or doctor of philosophy in nursing program – Alverno College, Concordia College, Edgewood College, Marquette University, UW-Eau Claire, UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Oshkosh, and Viterbo University; and eight institutions that provide a master’s degree in nursing/nurse educator program -- Bellin College, Cardinal Stritch College, Carroll University, Concordia University, Edgewood College, UW-Eau Claire, UW-Milwaukee and UW-Oshkosh.

ANALYSIS

Under the request, the \$5,000,000 GPR provided under Act 58 would be transferred to the continuing appropriation created under the Act and utilized to establish a Nurse Educators program. According to HEAB, \$100,000 annually would be utilized for marketing and administration of the program, with the remainder awarded to recipients. Administrative costs in the first year would include approximately \$9,100 to build a database for program administration, and in subsequent years would include up to approximately \$4,000 annually in ongoing database maintenance and improvement costs.

After consulting with UW Nursing and Health Sciences faculty, HEAB plans to divide the program into three categories based on degree types, as shown in the following table: (1) a PhD/postdoctoral program with 30 potential participants receiving a maximum award of \$50,000 per year; (2) a DNP (Doctor of Nursing Practice or Doctor of Philosophy of Nursing) program with 40 potential participants and a maximum award of \$40,000 per year; and (3) a Master in Science Nursing Education program with 60 potential participants and a maximum award of \$30,000 per year. As a continuing appropriation, funds not utilized in a given fiscal year would be carried over for use in future fiscal years.

Nurse Educators Program Annual Budget

Program	<u>Potential Participants</u>	<u>Maximum Annual Award</u>	<u>Subtotal</u>
PhD Student/Postdoctoral Fellow	30	\$50,000	\$1,500,000
Doctor of Nursing Practice/Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (DNP)	40	40,000	1,600,000
Master of Science in Nursing	60	30,000	1,800,000
Marketing/Administration	N/A	N/A	<u>100,000</u>
Total	130		\$5,000,000

An individual could receive either a fellowship or loan repayment assistance for any of the degrees in the table above. Current students or individuals pursuing postdoctoral training would be eligible for a fellowship. Annually, HEAB staff would verify whether each recipient is enrolled in school for the following year or graduated. After graduation, HEAB staff would verify the recipient has obtained employment as a nurse educator and confirm annually whether they are meeting their obligation to teach for three consecutive years. Similar to the nursing student loan program, if they do not meet their obligation, they would be required to repay a prorated amount of their award at an interest rate of 5% annually.

In addition to the fellowships, the program would also provide loan repayment for nursing educators working at a Wisconsin higher educational institution (including private, non-profit institutions, UW System institutions or campuses, and technical college institutions) who agree to teach for three consecutive years from the date of award. Eligible nursing educators would submit an application documenting their total graduate degree-level outstanding nursing educational indebtedness and awards would be based on the type of degree the educator holds. HEAB indicates that loan repayments would be provided directly to the loan servicer at the end of each year of teaching per the agreement. For example, a nursing educator with a Master's of Science in Nursing degree with outstanding total indebtedness of \$100,000 could receive up to \$30,000 in repayment assistance per year for a total of \$90,000 in loan repayment assistance after three years.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the HEAB request to transfer funding held in reserve for this purpose in the Committee's s. 20.865(4)(a) appropriation of \$5 million in 2022-23 to the nursing educators continuing appropriation under s. 20.235(1)(co) of the statutes.
2. Deny the request.

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