

CHAPTER 26  
HEALTH CARE AWARD PROGRAM

**283—26.1(261) Health care award program.** The health care award program is a state-supported and state-administered program established to provide financial awards to nurse educators teaching at eligible Iowa colleges and universities, as well as applicants who agree to practice as registered nurses, advanced registered nurse practitioners, or physician assistants in service commitment areas for five consecutive years, and who meet the requirements of these rules.

[ARC 4186C, IAB 12/19/18, effective 1/23/19; ARC 6889C, IAB 2/8/23, effective 3/15/23]

**283—26.2(261) Definitions.** As used in this chapter:

*“Advanced registered nurse practitioner”* means an individual who graduated from an accredited graduate or postgraduate advanced practice educational program, is licensed by the board of nursing as a registered nurse, is licensed by the board of nursing as an advanced registered nurse practitioner, and is employed as an advanced registered nurse practitioner.

*“Nurse educator”* means a registered nurse who holds a master’s or doctorate degree and is employed by an Iowa community college, an accredited private institution defined in Iowa Code section 261.9, or an institution of higher learning governed by the state board of regents as a faculty member who teaches nursing as provided in 655—Chapter 2 at a nursing program approved by the board of nursing pursuant to Iowa Code section 152.5.

*“Physician assistant”* means an individual who graduated with a master’s degree, holds a practitioner’s license to practice as a physician assistant pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 148C, and is employed as a physician assistant.

*“Registered nurse”* means a nurse who is licensed by the board of nursing as a registered nurse and is employed as a registered nurse.

*“Service commitment area”* means a city in Iowa with a population of less than 26,000 that is located more than 20 miles from a city with a population of 50,000 or more. Locations and distances between cities will be consistently measured and verified by calculating the shortest travel distance on paved roads. After an eligible applicant signs an agreement to practice in a service commitment area, subsequent population increases will not impact that applicant’s continued eligibility for the program, to the extent allowed in rule 283—26.3(261).

[ARC 4186C, IAB 12/19/18, effective 1/23/19; ARC 5137C, IAB 8/12/20, effective 9/16/20; ARC 5222C, IAB 10/7/20, effective 11/11/20; ARC 6889C, IAB 2/8/23, effective 3/15/23]

**283—26.3(261) Eligibility requirements.**

**26.3(1)** An eligible applicant must be:

*a.* A student in the final year of a degree program leading to a license to practice as an advanced registered nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered nurse who signs an agreement to practice in a service commitment area for five consecutive years; or

*b.* A licensed advanced registered nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered nurse who signs an agreement to practice in a service commitment area for five consecutive years; or

*c.* A nurse educator who signs an agreement to teach full-time during the fall and spring semesters, or the equivalent, for five consecutive years; or

*d.* A nurse educator who teaches at least part-time during the fall and spring semesters, or the equivalent. The individual must also be employed as an advanced registered nurse practitioner or registered nurse in Iowa, and the total hours worked between these occupations must equate to full-time employment. An advanced registered nurse practitioner or registered nurse who signs an agreement to teach at least part-time as a nurse educator is not required to be employed in a service commitment area but is required to work at least part-time as a nurse educator for five consecutive years.

**26.3(2)** An eligible applicant must complete and file an application for the program by the deadline established by the commission. If funds remain available after the application deadline, the commission will continue to accept applications.

**26.3(3)** An eligible applicant must annually complete and return to the commission an affidavit of practice verifying full-time employment, as defined by the employer, in a service commitment area during the entire year as an advanced registered nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered nurse, or full-time employment, as defined by the employer, as a nurse educator. A nurse educator who teaches part-time during the fall and spring semesters, or the equivalent, and is also employed as a registered nurse or advanced registered nurse practitioner in Iowa must annually complete and return an affidavit of practice verifying that the total hours worked equates to full-time employment.  
[ARC 4186C, IAB 12/19/18, effective 1/23/19; ARC 6889C, IAB 2/8/23, effective 3/15/23]

**283—26.4(261) Awarding of funds.**

**26.4(1) Selection criteria.** All completed applications received on or before the published deadline will be considered for funding. To the extent possible, an equal number of new advanced registered nurse practitioners, nurse educators, physician assistants, and registered nurses will be offered awards based on the availability of appropriated funds. In the event that funding is insufficient to award all eligible applicants within an occupation category, criteria for selection of eligible applicants within each occupation category will be prioritized as follows:

*a.* Renewal status. The priority status of the applicant in the first year funding is received will be retained for renewal in priority determinations in future years as long as the applicant continues to meet the criteria in rule 283—26.3(261). Applicants within this category are prioritized as follows:

(1) Eligible applicants who are Iowa residents and eligible applicants who are members of the Iowa national guard, if requested by the adjutant general;

(2) Date of application;

*b.* Students in the final year of a degree program leading to a license to practice in a specified occupation under this chapter who are Iowa residents or who are members of the Iowa national guard, if requested by the adjutant general; and advanced registered nurse practitioners and registered nurses who agree to begin practice as nurse educators on at least a part-time basis and who are Iowa residents or members of the Iowa national guard, if requested by the adjutant general. Applicants within this category are prioritized by date of application;

*c.* Iowa residents or members of the Iowa national guard, if requested by the adjutant general, who are licensed to practice in a specified occupation under this chapter and who agree to work in a service commitment area but who are not employed in a service commitment area at the time of application. Applicants within this category are prioritized by date of application;

*d.* The most recent graduates of a degree program leading to a license to practice in a specified occupation under this chapter or leading to the qualification to be a nurse educator, with the most recent academic year graduates given priority, who are Iowa residents or members of the Iowa national guard, if requested by the adjutant general. Applicants within this category are prioritized by date of application;

*e.* Students in the final year of a degree program leading to a license to practice in a specified occupation under this chapter who are neither Iowa residents nor members of the Iowa national guard requested by the adjutant general; and advanced registered nurse practitioners and registered nurses who agree to begin practice as nurse educators on at least a part-time basis and who are neither Iowa residents nor members of the Iowa national guard requested by the adjutant general. Applicants within this category are prioritized by date of application;

*f.* Individuals who are neither Iowa residents nor members of the Iowa national guard requested by the adjutant general but who are licensed to practice in a specified occupation under this chapter, and who agree to work in a service commitment area but are not employed in a service commitment area at the time of application. Applicants within this category are prioritized by date of application;

*g.* The most recent graduates of a degree program leading to a license to practice in a specified occupation under this chapter or leading to the qualification to be a nurse educator, who are neither Iowa residents nor members of the Iowa national guard requested by the adjutant general, with the most recent academic year graduates given priority. Applicants within this category are prioritized by date of application.

**26.4(2)** *Applicants who are members of the Iowa national guard requested by the adjutant general.* Applicants who are members of the Iowa national guard, if requested by the adjutant general, are subject to the following provisions:

*a.* Members of the Iowa national guard are exempt from the service commitment area requirement, and

*b.* Members of the Iowa national guard must have satisfactorily completed required guard training and must maintain satisfactory performance of guard duty.

**26.4(3)** *Annual award.* The maximum annual award shall be \$6,000.

**26.4(4)** *Extent of award.* Eligible applicants may receive an award for no more than five consecutive years. Eligible applicants who fail to receive awards in consecutive years will not be considered for subsequent years of awards.

**26.4(5)** *Disbursement of funds.*

*a.* Awards will be disbursed upon completion of the year for which the award was approved and upon certification from the employer that the advanced registered nurse practitioner, nurse educator, physician assistant, or registered nurse was employed full-time, as defined by the employer, during the entire year and completed the year in good standing.

*b.* Awards will be distributed directly to the eligible applicant.

[ARC 4186C, IAB 12/19/18, effective 1/23/19; ARC 6889C, IAB 2/8/23, effective 3/15/23]

### **283—26.5(261) Award cancellation.**

**26.5(1)** An eligible applicant who has been designated for an award shall notify the commission within 30 days following termination or cessation of full-time practice in a service commitment area as an advanced registered nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered nurse; termination or cessation of full-time employment as a nurse educator; or combined full-time employment as a nurse educator and registered nurse or nurse educator and advanced registered nurse practitioner.

**26.5(2)** A recipient of an award is responsible for notifying the commission immediately of a change in name, place of employment, or home address.

[ARC 4186C, IAB 12/19/18, effective 1/23/19; ARC 6889C, IAB 2/8/23, effective 3/15/23]

**283—26.6(261) Restrictions.** A recipient of an award under Iowa Code section 261.114 or 261.115 shall not be eligible for an award under this chapter.

[ARC 4186C, IAB 12/19/18, effective 1/23/19; ARC 6889C, IAB 2/8/23, effective 3/15/23]

**283—26.7(261) Transition provisions.** Recipients of awards through the health care loan repayment program during the 2022 state fiscal year will be eligible for funding under the health care award program if the eligible applicants meet the eligibility criteria of the health care award program. Under this provision, no recipient will receive more than five consecutive awards between the health care loan repayment program and the health care award program. Under this provision, recipients can elect to continue to have the award applied directly to previously verified outstanding federal student loans.

[ARC 6889C, IAB 2/8/23, effective 3/15/23]

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 261.116.

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