

Massachusetts Nurse Faculty Salary Recommendations

December 2023

Executive Summary

Massachusetts is experiencing a severe nursing workforce shortage exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurse educators are essential in resolving the shortage and impacting other workforce challenges. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) (2023), the faculty vacancy rate continues to increase; the national faculty vacancy rate was 8.8% in 2022. Jenny Keyt, AACN Data Manager, provided data that the faculty vacancy rate in Massachusetts is 10.5%, higher than the national average. Looming faculty retirements will amplify this shortage, the average age of professors, associate professors, and assistant professors are 62.5, 56.7, and 50.6 respectively (AACN, 2022). The faculty shortage impacts the graduation rates of new nurses.

Nationally, nearly 67% of schools report that recruiting issues are related to noncompetitive salaries (AACN, 2023). It is essential to close the salary gap between clinical nurses and nurse faculty to facilitate faculty recruitment and retention. To date, Massachusetts has yet to offer any financial support to address the faculty shortage issue. Other states have created financial initiatives to address the faculty shortage.

Wages¹

The [2023 average hourly rate for a registered nurse](#) (RN) in the U.S. is \$32.44. A 2022 survey of newly graduated registered nurses with their associate degree in nursing identified an average starting nursing salary of \$72,000. Some graduates reported a sign-on bonus of \$10,000 for one year's employment commitment.

A nurse practitioner (NP) is an MSN-prepared advanced practice registered nurse (APRN). In 2023, the median hourly pay for an NP was \$54–\$63, with an annual salary of \$116,000–\$131,000.

Master's degree nursing faculty salaries typically range between \$44,000 and \$91,000 annually. The 2023 [average nurse faculty salary](#) in the United States is \$63,552. The average hourly rate for nursing faculty is \$30.55 per hour, lower than that of a registered nurse and much lower than an NP.

Non-competitive faculty salaries hinder attracting and retaining full-time faculty members, particularly in the community college setting. Newly master's prepared faculty without previous teaching experience in the Massachusetts community college system start at an annual salary

¹ Section pulled from NCWS Faculty Shortage Report shared on 9/5/23.

of \$59,000. Professional practice experience is not considered teaching experience, therefore nurses who seek to work in academia are generally given salary offers at the lower end of the pay scale, regardless of their years of clinical experience.

Comparing Salaries

Fully understanding nurse faculty salaries can be difficult based on several complicating factors:

- Differences in contract length (i.e., 9-month compared to 12-month employees)
- Adjunct faculty working full-time hours often represent a higher salary comparison
- Varying positions (i.e., instructor to professor) and level of faculty education
- Faculty rank or experience in academia affecting pay disparities (i.e., a 20-year clinical nurse with no experience in academia would be at the bottom of the pay scale)

The salary information on the following page and associated disparities are an estimate based on the best and most current data available, accounting for the factors previously mentioned. Some variation in these statistics should be appreciated.

The following tables depict the reported annual salaries of nurse educators teaching at the LPN through doctoral level. Each source used to report this information was collected using different tools. The last table depicts data on nurses working as clinicians compared to previous tables which illustrate salaries for nurse faculty in a variety of nursing programs.

For Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs, faculty members teaching didactic as part or all of their workload must hold at least a master's degree, as regulated by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN). Faculty teaching in practical nursing programs must hold a baccalaureate degree in nursing or higher. Generally, nursing faculty must hold a doctoral degree or be enrolled in a doctoral program in order to teach in master's and doctoral programs.

Data on Nurse Faculty Salaries

Program Type: Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)

Type of Program	Annual Salary Range
Technical School (usually 12-month contracts)	\$76,167
Community College (9-or-10-month contracts)	\$65,800

Source: Survey Conducted by Mass. Practical Nurse Education Committee, May 2023

Program Type: Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN)

Job Title	Median Salary
Full-time faculty (12-month)	\$102,500
Full-time faculty	\$74,500

Program Type: Baccalaureate & Higher

Job Title	Median Salary
Professor	\$116,046
Associate Professor	\$89,031
Assistant Professor	\$79,220
Instructor	\$73,561

Source: AACN (2022=2023) *Instructional and Administrative Nursing Faculty in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing* (North Atlantic Region), pg. 18.

Data on Clinical Nurse Salaries

Job Title	Median Salary (National Workforce Survey)	Average Salary (Bureau of Labor Statistics)	Notes
Registered Nurse*	\$83,000	\$96,630	Registered Nurses may hold a diploma, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree.
Nurse Practitioner**		\$129,540	Nurse practitioner minimum education is a master's degree.

*Source: The 2022 National Workforce Survey, April 2023. Retrieved from [The 2022 National Nursing Workforce Survey - Journal of Nursing Regulation](#), Dec. 4, 2023.

**Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Department of Commerce (2022)

**Nurse practitioner average salaries are based on a range of \$61,180 (Less than one year of experience) to \$151,310 (More than 20 years of experience)

Percentage Increase Recommendations

Multiple efforts are currently underway to address the nursing faculty shortage as a key tactic to bolstering the nursing workforce. The *Nurse Faculty Shortage Reduction Act* (S. 2815), bipartisan legislation introduced by U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), proposed a grant to supplement the salaries of nursing faculty from eligible schools of nursing to equal the salary of nurses in clinical practice.

The median salary for a clinical nurse is \$83,000–\$96,000 per year with a median yearly salary point of \$89,500. The median range for nursing faculty (Instructor to Associate Professor) is \$73,000–\$89,000 per year with a median yearly salary of \$81,000. Comparing median salary ranges, clinical nurses earn approximately 10.5% more every year than nursing faculty.

Cost of living increases should also be considered when determining the appropriate salary. The committee's recommendations include the 8.7% cost of living adjustment for 2023 (COLA, 2023).

The NCWS Faculty and Education Committee is recommending a 19.2% across the board salary increase for nursing faculty roles (i.e. full-time faculty, part-time faculty, adjunct faculty) over a two-year period. The committee recommends an 8.7% to address cost of living disparities. In the second year, the committee recommends a 10.5% increase to address the difference between nurse faculty and clinical nurse salaries. Addressing this disparity in the second year will allow the state to consider any potential additional funding that would become available if S. 2815 is passed.

Furthermore, it is the recommendation of the NCWS Faculty & Education Committee that the salary increase be considered for nursing program leadership (i.e., Deans, Administrators, Directors, etc.). The National Council of State Boards in Nursing identified the turnover of program leadership as a negative indicator for program success and student satisfaction. Consistent leadership is crucial to graduating safe and competent nursing students (Spector et. al., 2020).

Addressing nursing faculty salary disparities is a key component to current faculty retention, new faculty recruitment, and optimizing nursing student capacity throughout the commonwealth.

Resources

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2023). *AACN Annual Report* [PDF].
<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Publications/Annual-Reports/2023-AACN-Annual-Report.pdf>

Costa, D. K., & Friese, C. R. (2022). Policy Strategies for Addressing Current Threats to the U.S. Nursing Workforce. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 386(26), 2454–2456.
<https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp2202662>

Social Security Administration. "Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Information."
<https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/factsheets/colafacts2023.pdf>

Spector, N., Silvestre, J., Alexander, M., Martin, B., & Hooper, J. (2020). NCSBN regulatory guidelines and evidence-based quality indicators for nursing education programs. *Journal of Nursing Regulation* (11)2, S32-S41.

[2022 nursing trends and salary survey results \(myamericannurse.com\)](https://myamericannurse.com/2022-nursing-trends-and-salary-survey-results)

[Murkowski, Durbin Introduce the Nurse Faculty Shortage Reduction Act \(senate.gov\)](https://www.senate.gov/legislation/bills/118/s2815)

<https://www.congress.gov/118/bills/s2815/BILLS-118s2815is.htm>