Washington's Health Workforce SENTINEL NETWORK

Findings Brief: *Nursing Homes and Skilled Nursing Facilities*

Spring 2025

This brief highlights workforce needs reported by Washington's **nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities** to the Health Workforce Sentinel Network in **May/June 2025.** These facilities have contributed workforce insights since 2016, across 17 reporting periods. More findings are available at wa.sentinelnetwork.org/findings.

Nursing Homes/Skilled Nursing Facilities

Top occupations with exceptionally long vacancies*

Rank	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Spring 2025
1	Registered nurse	Registered nurse	Nursing assistant	Registered nurse	Registered nurse	Registered nurse	Registered nurse
2	Licensed practical nurse Nursing assistant	Licensed practical nurse	Licensed practical nurse Registered nurse	Licensed practical nurse Nursing assistant	Licensed practical nurse	Licensed practical nurse Nursing assistant	Nursing Assistant
3	Occupational therapist Physical therapist	Nursing assistant	Cook / Food services	Cook / Food services	Nursing assistant	Cook / Food services Environmental services Speech-language therapist	Licensed practical nurse
4	Speech-language therapist	Cook / Food services	Dietitian / Nutritionist	Environmental services Occupational therapy assistant	Occupational therapist Physical therapist	No additional occupations reported	Medical records specialist

← Most cited

*Findings prior to Spring 2022 not shown due to space constraints. Occupations cited by the same number of responses share the same rank number.

Reasons for Exceptionally Long Vacancies

Respondents cited not enough qualified applicants and a variety of issues as some of the main reasons for exceptionally long vacancies across occupations. Examples of responses below:

- *[Registered nurse] There are not enough RNs in the labor force to fill the vacancies and every place that needs an RN is hiring. Schools with nursing programs can't add more seats because they can't recruit enough instructors to increase capacity. We have increased our RN wage scale, offered sign-on bonuses, and sponsor ads on indeed. We have had an RN 24/7 waiver for the last 2 years because we can't staff a RN 24 hours a day.*
- *[Registered nurse] Finding someone who is qualified with SNF experience and due to salary expectations.*
- *[Nursing assistant] Not enough CNAs out there. Competing with other healthcare providers due to nursing shortage.*
- *[Medical records specialist] Wages and job qualifications has made it difficult to fill.*

Overarching Workforce Issues: Themes and Examples

Currently, what are your organization's top workforce issues?
Over half of respondents representing nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities said **recruiting new workers/filling vacancies.** Examples of responses include:

- *"This is a rural area, commutes are often 45 - 60 minutes each way, too far for many staff members We are advertising, offering sign-on bonuses, attending job fairs, partnering with the community college and high schools in the area."*
- *"The amount of paperwork to get a position posted and then getting all the different signatures to request the approval to post a position can take weeks."*

In the past year, has your organization supported "grow-your-own" programs (i.e., apprenticeships, residencies or on-the-job training opportunities) to train workers for specific roles?
Over half of respondents supported "grow-your-own" programs.

- *"Internal scholarship program primarily used for nursing degrees."*
- *"Partnering with nursing schools and NAC training programs to provide opportunities for clinical experience."*

To what extent have the following affected your ability to recruit and retain your workforce in the past year?
Childcare and housing availability remain a top issues for employers, impacting their recruitment and retention efforts.

Childcare availability

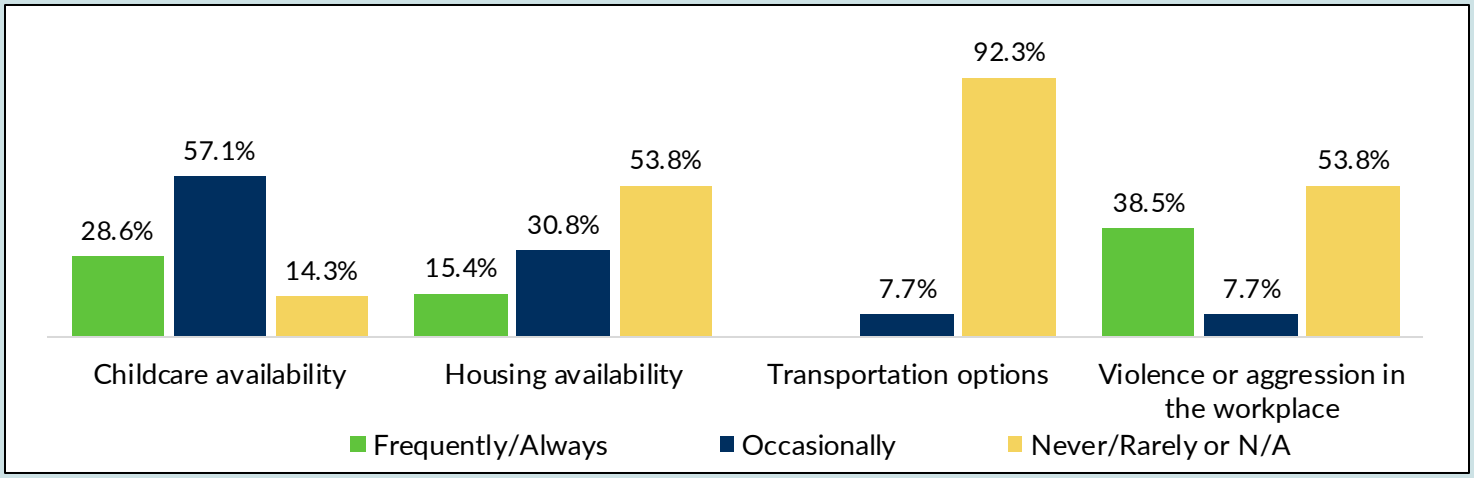
- *"Childcare for evening and night shift workers is very difficult to find."*
- *"Cost of childcare has a disproportionate impact on CNAs vs. RNs; however, some staff have reduced availability or left employment due to childcare issues."*
- *"High cost of childcare causing staff to stay home and not be as available."*

Housing availability

- *"At times we lose staff due to housing costs."*
- *"Not able to afford rent but do not qualify for any assistance."*

Transportation options

- *"There is no bus service for shift workers. The long commute to work requires personal transportation (a car). For single parents this can be a financial burden due to the costs of gas and maintenance."*

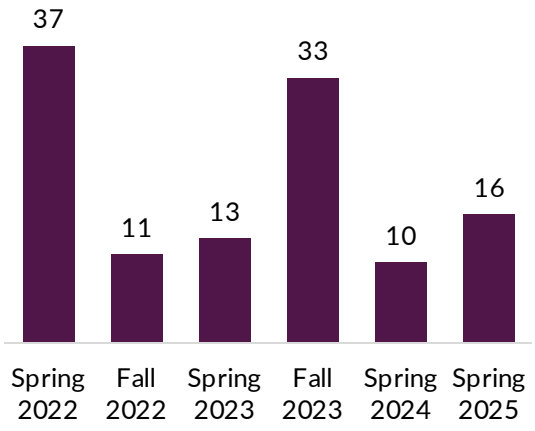


Reasons for Retention/Turnover Problems

Respondents described a variety of issues, including salary, wage, and benefits issues and workload and patient acuity issues, as some of the main reasons for turnover and retention issues across occupations. Examples of responses below:

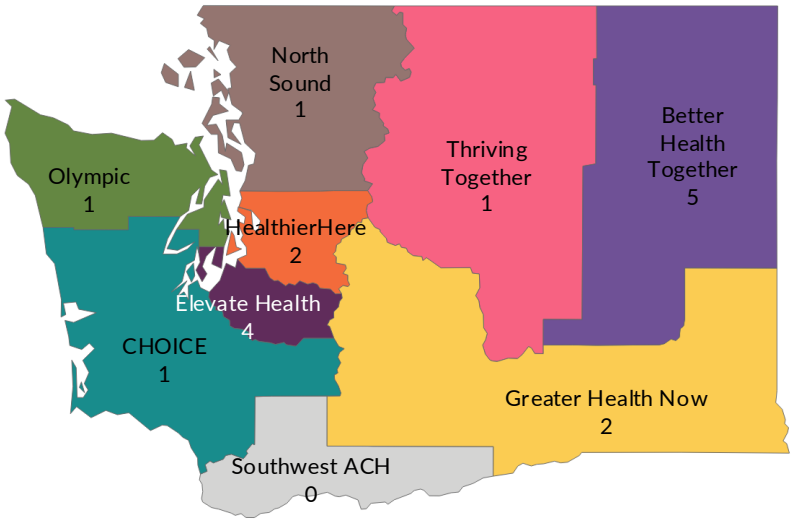
- *[Registered nurse] There are so many places hiring, including the hospitals. Often a RN leaves for a higher wage than what we can offer or a schedule that we cannot accommodate. We are a 24/7 business and 7 days a week, so cannot always accommodate M-F no evenings, nights or weekends.*
- *[Registered nurse] Adjusting to working 7 pm to 7 am has been challenging. We've also had many nurses move out of the area due to the high cost of living.*
- *[Multiple occupations] High work volume and stress due to regulatory expectations and demands.*
- *[Multiple occupations] This is a rural area, commutes are often 45 - 60 minutes each way, too far for many staff members.*

Number of Responses from Nursing Homes and Skilled Nursing Facilities in WA by Data Collection Date



*Findings prior to Spring 2022 not shown due to space constraints.

Number of Responding Nursing Homes and Skilled Nursing Facilities by Accountable Community of Health (ACH), Spring 2025



Note: Each facility may serve clients/patients in more than one county, which is why map totals may exceed total unique responses.

About the Washington Health Workforce Sentinel Network

The Sentinel Network links the healthcare sector with policymakers, workforce planners and educators to identify and respond to changing demand for healthcare workers, with a focus is on identifying newly emerging skills and roles required by employers. The Sentinel Network is an initiative of Washington's Health Workforce Council, conducted collaboratively by Washington's Workforce Board and the University of Washington's Center for Health Workforce Studies. Funding to initiate the Sentinel Network came from the Healthier Washington initiative, with ongoing support from the Washington State Legislature.

Why become a Sentinel? *As a Sentinel, you can*:
--Communicate your organization's workforce needs to inform policy and planning responses.
--Have access to current and actionable information about emerging healthcare workforce needs.
--Compare your organization's experience and emerging workforce demand trends with similar employer groups.

To view an interactive summary of findings and to provide information from your organization:
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