



July 21, 2023

Amanda Miller
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Postsecondary Education
LBJ Building, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202

Re: Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) Program

Dear Deputy Assistant Secretary Miller:

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the national voice for academic nursing, appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) Program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. AACN works to establish quality standards for nursing education, assists schools in implementing those standards, influences the nursing profession to improve health care, and promotes public support for professional nursing education, research, and practice. Today, AACN represents over 865 member schools of nursing, over 530,000 students, and over 54,000 faculty at public and private universities nationwide, which offer a mix of baccalaureate, graduate, and post-graduate programs.¹

AACN commends the Department of Education for supporting graduate education in areas of national need. **For the next anticipated funding cycle, we recommend adding nursing as an academic area to support** and otherwise concur with the academic areas proposed. The crisis facing nursing education is evident in data we collect at AACN. Between 2013 and 2022 enrollment in PhD nursing programs decreased by 14.8%.² Nurses prepared at the PhD level serve as leaders in academia and practice, as nurse scientists advancing research, and as faculty in schools of nursing. As we address the growing healthcare needs of our nation, we cannot overlook the compelling need and valuable contributions PhD prepared nurses make sustaining the pipeline of direct care nurses and nurse leaders as well as improving the health and well-being of all Americans.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the GAANN competition for FY 2024. AACN firmly believes that nursing should be included in the FY 2024 GAANN program as there is a critical national need for nurse educators and researchers. If you have any questions or if AACN can be of assistance, please contact Dr. Brenda Baker, AACN's Director of Policy, at BBaker@aacnnursing.org.

Sincerely,

Deborah E. Trautman, PhD, RN, FAAN
President and Chief Executive Officer

¹ About the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. Retrieved from: <https://www.aacnnursing.org/About-AACN>

² News Data Show Enrollment Declines in Schools of Nursing. Retrieved from: <https://www.aacnnursing.org/news-data/all-news/new-data-show-enrollment-declines-in-schools-of-nursing-raising-concerns-about-the-nations-nursing-workforce#:~:text=Since%20PhD%20program%20enrollment%20began,scientists%2C%20educators%2C%20and%20leaders.>