



Request for Proposals: Competency-Based Education for Practice-Ready Nurse Graduates

**AACN is Seeking Pilot Schools to Implement
Two Domains of *The Essentials: Core Competencies for
Professional Nursing Education***

*Sponsored by the
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
with funding from the American Nurses Foundation*

THE VOICE OF ACADEMIC NURSING

655 K Street, NW, Suite 750 · Washington, DC 20001 · 202-463-6930 *tel* · 202-785-8320 *fax* ·
www.aacnnursing.org

Proposal Deadline: Friday, November 4, 2022

Anticipated Award Date: Friday, December 2, 2022

Project Completion Date: Draft final report from pilot schools due to AACN on January 30, 2025. Final report from pilot schools due March 1, 2025.

Project Statement: The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) received funding from the American Nurses Foundation (ANF) through the [Reimagining Nursing Initiative](#) to pilot the implementation of the [2021 Essentials](#) at 10 nursing schools along with their practice partners across the United States. The 2021 AACN *Essentials* outline the necessary curriculum content, clinical experiences, and expected competencies of graduates from baccalaureate, master's, and Doctor of Nursing Practice programs. AACN is looking to accelerate the transition to competency-based education (CBE) by identifying and supporting innovative approaches to competency development and skills assessment for prelicensure nurses prepared in baccalaureate and master's programs.

Project Need: For more than a decade, many health professions have begun transitioning to CBE, which emphasizes having students achieve competencies before progressing to the next level. Evidence shows that this transition results in clinicians who are better prepared to practice upon graduation. With that evidence in mind, AACN's member schools endorsed the move to a new model of nursing education with the *2021 Essentials*, which supports transitioning to CBE with the intention of preparing nurses who are more practice ready. To accelerate and amplify this work, AACN received funding from the ANF to work with 10 pilot schools and their practice partners to develop innovative ways of achieving practice-readiness through competency-based education and assessment.

Project Description: AACN will select 10 pilot schools to conduct thorough curricular reviews in order to develop and implement competency-based learning and assessment in two domains: Domain 3 - Population Health and one other domain selected by the pilot schools. The project will employ a Technical Assistance model, which will involve collaborative support and guidance that is both targeted and adaptive to address the needs of individual schools and their practice partners. Based on the learnings from the selected pilot schools, AACN will develop an adaptable framework for CBE that can be applied across diverse academic nursing programs and practice settings.

AACN has convened a [Practice-Ready Advisory Group](#) to support and advise the pilot project and implementation process. The Advisory Group will make the final selection of pilot schools, based on established inclusion criteria for applicants. A final cohort of schools reflecting diverse characteristics will be selected. In this project, considerations of equity will be a core guiding principle for our collaborative work with pilot schools and practice partners. Applicant programs will clearly display a commitment to [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) within their mission, vision, and/or goals. To allow AACN to develop tools to help

THE VOICE OF ACADEMIC NURSING

655 K Street, NW, Suite 750 · Washington, DC 20001 · 202-463-6930 tel · 202-785-8320 fax ·
www.aacnnursing.org

schools at any stage of the 2021 *Essentials* implementation, selected schools will include some that have not yet begun the process of transitioning to CBE and some that have taken initial steps. AACN will provide Technical Assistance through a *Virtual Sharing Collective* that will be established to allow pilot schools and their practice partners to share and learn from each other as they develop and implement CBE in their programs. The implementation phase will include monthly *Virtual Sharing Collective* meetings to facilitate open dialogue about the implementation process and a transparent flow of information. AACN will expect pilot schools to report any issues with curricular review, institutional roadblocks, practice partners, or any other difficulties and will provide targeted support to schools to help navigate these issues. Guidance and demonstration of evaluation metrics and templates for reports will be developed collaboratively among pilot schools and AACN.

Expectations for Pilot Schools and their Practice Partners

All pilot schools and their practice partners will:

- a) Participate in an orientation meeting and subsequent meetings of the *Virtual Sharing Collective*.
- b) Participate in joint bi-annual meetings with AACN and the American Nurses Foundation the first of which will be a virtual meeting at 4pm ET on December 5, 2022. Additional meetings will be scheduled at a later date.
- c) Map current didactic and clinical nursing curricula with 2021 *Essentials* Domain 3 - Population Health and one other domain and identify where additional didactic and clinical experiences are needed, as well as new learning strategies and assessment methods. Schools will track progress with the newly incorporated strategies and assessment methods and will report their progress throughout the pilot project.
- d) Address the four spheres of care for the two Domains, as outlined in the 2021 *Essentials*: wellness and prevention, chronic disease management, restorative, and supportive/ palliative care.
- e) Integrate learning and assessment strategies into the curriculum during the 2023-2024 academic year and implement the new strategies with at least one cohort of students across this time period.
- f) Evaluate use of learning strategies and resources and assess outcomes of student learning using principles of competency-based education.
- g) Share their experiences, successes, and challenges during project implementation with AACN and the *Virtual Sharing Collective*.
- h) Provide AACN with all products developed, including curricular maps, learning resources, and assessment tools.
- i) Submit three reports (two mid-term reports and a final report) during the grant period.
- j) Pilot schools will agree to serve as mentorship leaders and share their experiences with a small group of schools that are adopting the 2021 *Essentials* in their curricula.
- k) Pilot schools and their practice partners will need to apply for Institutional Review Board approval to collect data on their transition to CBE.

THE VOICE OF ACADEMIC NURSING

655 K Street, NW, Suite 750 · Washington, DC 20001 · 202-463-6930 *tel* · 202-785-8320 *fax* ·
www.aacnnursing.org

- l) Obtain institutional approval, as needed, to make the curricular changes.

Expectations for AACN:

AACN will:

- a) Orient lead faculty and their practice partners to the grant goals, learning resources, and *Virtual Sharing Collective*.
- b) Apply for Institutional Review Board approval to collect aggregate data about the project.
- c) Provide all pilot schools with a curriculum mapping tool.
- d) Provide an outline of evaluation data to be collected at various points of the implementation process.
- e) Work with pilot schools and their practice partners using an iterative process to develop and implement learning and assessment strategies to inform the broader 2021 *Essentials* implementation process.
- f) Aggregate and evaluate data from the program to share broadly as actionable insights across the larger academic community.
- g) Provide ongoing learning opportunities related to 2021 *Essentials* implementation to the larger academic nursing community.

Expected Outcomes:

- a) Identification of effective CBE approaches and implementation strategies for the AACN 2021 *Essentials*, including the development of a mapped curricula with identified gaps.
- b) Inventory of innovative competency-based learning experiences developed in collaboration with practice partners.
- c) Demonstration of integrated learning assessments across the curriculum for the *Essentials* domains. This will include from each pilot school two *Essentials* domains: Domain 3 - Population Health, including enhanced understanding of how to teach the social determinants of health across the curriculum, and one other domain chosen by the pilot school.
- d) Establishment of a virtual learning community to share best practices through AACN-facilitated monthly seminars, support, and content (presentations, consultants, other learning resources for areas identified by pilot schools).
- e) Aggregate data shared broadly as actionable insights across the larger academic community.
- f) A minimum of one cohort of students at each pilot school will have successfully completed at least one academic year of the revised curriculum.
- g) The creation of mentorship circles with pilot schools to help lead groups of like-schools in supporting the adoption of competency-based education in their curricula.

THE VOICE OF ACADEMIC NURSING

655 K Street, NW, Suite 750 · Washington, DC 20001 · 202-463-6930 tel · 202-785-8320 fax ·
www.aacnnursing.org

Eligibility:

- Schools of nursing with prelicensure nursing programs in the U.S. at the bachelor's or master's level.
- Schools of nursing with new or existing practice partnerships. Partners may include but are not limited to academic health centers, community-based clinics, or other health facilities but must be committed to working with the school to develop and implement CBE across the curriculum including assessment of students' readiness for practice.
- Schools of nursing must clearly display a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within their mission, vision, and/or goals.
- Special consideration will be given to proposals submitted by schools of nursing serving under-represented groups, rural or low-income students and communities, or in health professional/healthcare shortage areas.

Awards: AACN will make 10 awards of \$100,000 to each of the pilot schools. The awards will be made in three installments: project inception, project implementation, and project completion. Please use this [budget template](#) when preparing your application. Keep these funding restrictions in mind when submitting your application.

- Recipients may not use funds for research.
- Recipients may not use funds for clinical care but can use funds to pay preceptors/adjunct faculty.
- Recipients may only expend funds for reasonable program purposes, including personnel, travel, supplies, and services, such as contractual.
- The maximum indirect cost rate for funding from AACN is 10%. For further guidance, see [AACN's Indirect Cost Policy](#).

Representatives from the pilot schools of nursing and their practice partners will be required to participate in all *Virtual Sharing Collective* meetings. AACN will provide a template for reports, which will reflect the stage of implementation of the project. It also will include a summary of accomplishments, unanticipated developments/challenges, implications of findings, and evaluation based on the criteria developed by AACN in conjunction with the *Virtual Sharing Collective*. In addition to the three reports, each school will be expected to provide AACN with all products developed, including curricular maps, learning resources, and assessment tools, which will be collated and disseminated to other schools and practice partners.

The application should address activities to be conducted over the entire period of the grant and must include the following items:

- Name and location of school of nursing.
- Name of primary contact at school of nursing.
- Description of school of nursing population, including faculty, staff, and students.
- Name and location of primary practice partner or the practice partners that have committed to work with you developing, implementing and assessing the transition to

THE VOICE OF ACADEMIC NURSING

- CBE and preparing practice ready graduates.
- Name of primary contact at practice partner(s).
 - Description of the nature of new or existing practice partnership(s).
 - Description of population/community served by practice partner(s).
 - Description of previous experiences with these populations/communities and practice partners.
 - Description of prelicensure nursing student learning opportunities available with the practice partner(s).
 - Description of steps the school of nursing has already taken to implement the Domains of the 2021 *Essentials* or where your school is in the process (This information will be used to select pilot schools at various stages of implementation).
 - Identification of the Domain, in addition to Domain 3 - Population Health, which will be the focus of implementation for your school of nursing.
 - Explanation of why your school is uniquely positioned to implement CBE in this Domain.
 - Brief description of learning opportunities and assessment methods for students in Domain 3 - Population Health, with a focus on incorporating the social determinants of health into the curriculum that are currently in your curriculum or being planned.

Deadline: Applications must be submitted by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on November 4, 2022 through [this link](#).

For more information, contact:

Susan Corbridge, PhD, APRN, FAANP, FCCP, FAAN
Chief Essentials Program Officer
essentials@aacnnursing.org

THE VOICE OF ACADEMIC NURSING

655 K Street, NW, Suite 750 · Washington, DC 20001 · 202-463-6930 *tel* · 202-785-8320 *fax* ·
www.aacnnursing.org