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FINANCIAL AID FOR NURSING EDUCATION

Congratulations on choosing a career in nursing; it is a rewarding and essential profession! Although the American Nurses Association does not currently provide scholarship or loan assistance, there are significant other sources of funds to support your nursing education. This fact sheet contains some basic information; it also includes ideas and references on where to start your search.

School Office of Financial Aid

Your first and most important stop in seeking information should be the financial aid office of your educational institution. College and university offices of financial aid have a great deal of information available to them on both national and state sources of aid; they are there to help you when you are selecting educational programs. Contact them directly. Be prepared to work closely with these offices, and don't be afraid to be persistent in your contacts with them.

There are both public (federal and state) and private funds available for nursing school, especially at the BSN or MSN level. As a nursing student, you are also eligible for the same financial support available to any undergraduate student in an approved college/university. There are specific monies available for ethnic minorities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

There are also nursing student loans available directly through schools of nursing; check with your chosen school to see what may be available.

Federal Support

There are many and various sources of federal support for which you may be eligible; most are financial need-based. Stafford Loans, Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Perkins Loans and Supplemental Loans for Students are all possibilities. Information on these programs is too varied and extensive to list here, but can be obtained from the Federal Student Aid Information Center. Website is <http://studentaid.ed.gov>; the phone number is 1-800-4-FEDAID. (1-800-433-3243).

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is

State Support

Most states have programs of need-based loans for education available; contact your State Department of Health directly. Your school's financial aid office will also be knowledgeable about state-based programs in your area.

Other Sources

The National Student Nurses Association offers scholarships based upon both need and achievement. Only current nursing students are eligible. Contact them by mail at the NSNA Foundation, 45 Main Street, Suite 606, Brooklyn, NY 11201 or by phone at (718)-210-0705. See their web site at www.nсна.org.

The Health Careers Foundation provides combined scholarship/loan assistance to undergraduate nursing students. They often focus on adults changing careers. Contact: Health Careers Foundation, 3221 McKelvey Rd., #301, Bridgeton, MO 63044; (314)-770-1626. Or at www.hcinfo.org/homepage.asp.

Large health care employers, especially hospitals, are sometimes willing to provide a loan or scholarship to students who will work in that hospital after graduation. Check directly with the nursing or education office of hospitals in your area.

Aid for Graduate Nursing Programs

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) has nursing scholarships available for graduate degrees in specific nursing specialties. Service in a health professional shortage area is required upon graduation. Call 800-221-9393 or see the NHSC web site at <http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov>

another source of information on funds for health

careers. They offer loans for graduate nursing education programs, and scholarships for disadvantaged students. Contact the **Division of Student Assistance**, Bureau of Health Professions, at <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/dsa>. You must apply through participating schools.

Loan Repayment Programs

There are programs available to help you repay

nursing education loans after you have graduated;

they may require service in a health professional shortage area after graduation. Contact:

The NHSC Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program at <http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov> or at (800)-221-9393.

The Faculty Loan Repayment Program requires teaching service after graduation. Reach them at <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/DSA/flrp/index.htm>

Putting Together A Package

In addition to looking for one large scholarship to pay for your entire college program, you may also have success putting together a package of several smaller grants & loans. Many organizations and foundations offer small amounts tailored to particular interests and requirements. There are web sites which can help you find these by matching your personal information to an aid database. Try sites like www.fastweb.monster.com or www.scholarshipcoach.com

For Further Information

***The Student Guide: Financial Aid.** This pamphlet, which is published by the U.S. Department of Education, should be the first information you obtain. It is an explanation and annual update on general student aid programs offered by the federal government. Ask for it at college financial aid offices or by calling (800)-4FEDAID. Check out the Federal Student Aid Information Center at <http://studentaid.ed.gov>

Peterson's Guide to Nursing Programs, published in cooperation with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, is primarily an excellent listing of specific nursing school programs nationwide. However, it also includes an introductory section on financial aid for nursing education and information on aid for specific programs. Check your local bookstore. Or contact Peterson's Guides at www.Petersons.com (Click on "shop"); their phone is (800)-338-3282. The price for the 2005-2006 Guide is \$21.56.

There are many books available on how to find sources of scholarships and other funding. **How to Go to College Almost For Free** by Benjamin Kaplan, **Scholarship Handbook 2005**, and **The Scholarship Book: The Complete Guide to Private-Sector Scholarships** are just some examples. Check your local bookstore.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing: online at www.aacn.nche.edu/Education/financialaid.htm

Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society of Nursing: online at www.nursingsociety.org/career/scholarships_opps.html

The Johnson & Johnson Company: online at www.discovernursing.com/scholarship_search.aspx

Researching and assembling a financial aid package for your education is not easy; it requires time, attention and work from you. The rewards of this search, however, are many, as effort now will enable you to reach your personal and professional goals. We need nurses more than ever today, and ANA congratulates you on your decision to make nursing your career. Good luck in your education!