

Healthcare Support

Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants

Nursing Aides help to care for individuals who are physically ill, disabled, or injured residing in hospitals and nursing care facilities. They work under the supervision of nursing and medical staff helping patients eat, bathe, dress, get out of bed, and walk. They deliver meals and messages, tidy patient rooms, escort patients to operating and examining rooms.

Their job will often entail helping the medical staff move and set up equipment for procedures, reporting any changes to the patient's physical, mental, or emotional condition, and sometimes checking the patient's temperature, heart rate, respiration rate and blood pressure. Nursing aides working in nursing care facilities are often the primary caregivers to their patient's and have more direct contact than other members of the medical staff.

Working as a nursing aide can be a physically demanding profession. Nursing aides spend many hours on their feet standing and walking, and see many patients a day. They are prone to back injuries because of the heavy lifting involved in assisting patients with moving into and out of bed, standing, and walking. Exposure to infectious diseases, like hepatitis, and working with patients who may be disoriented, irritable, or uncooperative are also professional risks. Nursing aides perform unpleasant tasks such as emptying bedpans and changing soiled bed linens. Most nursing aides work 40 hour weeks, but those who work in facilities where patients require 24 hour care may work nights, weekends, and holidays, as in the case of hospital settings where schedules often rotate in a shift system.

Education/ Training:

How to Obtain:

A high school diploma or its equivalent is necessary for entry as a nursing aide. Training programs to become a nursing aide are often available in high schools, vocational schools, and community colleges. Some employers offer on-the-job training provided by a licensed nurse or an experienced aide. The qualifications for becoming an aide vary by state.

To become a nursing aide in New York state one must:

- Complete an approved training program
- Undergo a background check
- Complete the application

- Pass a competency examination offered the Prometric testing services within two years of completion of the training program

Those who are nursing aides working in nursing care facilities are required by the federal government to complete a minimum of:

- 75 hours of state approved training
- Pass a competency examination

Aides who complete these training programs are then known as Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs) and are placed on a state registry of nursing aides.

More Information on Certification:

- Certified Nursing Assistant Requirements in New York:
<http://www.prometric.com/nurseaide/ny/>
- New York Department of Health Nurse Aid Certification Handbook:
<http://www.prometric.com/NR/ronlyres/ebohz7asxvrggj336aiip7gfbwrdg4ntod4t7p2lv2vygddo22zemgsbkmivhy5ym2bvvdsc3kl2r4jyobuorharcqg/NYNAHandbook20081113.pdf>
- Prometric New York Nurse Aide Registry Application:
<http://www.prometric.com/NR/ronlyres/evgblzqxapvse7guwbo6q6mx6hszug57ijvx6oz3mtzg3xrxspizuccah3vq5ogszerzidkiwmcgdtwfkogidzh2mc/NYNAREgistryApp20081113.pdf>

Average Costs:

Training program costs for nursing assistants range from \$800 - \$1500* dollars when offered at community colleges or other educational institutions. However, many hospitals and nursing homes offer free nursing assistant training, but this varies by locality.

Prometric Testing Fee: \$115 - \$135 in examination and application fees, plus the cost of any exam study aids.

*Note: This figure does not include federal, state, or university financial aid resources such as grants, fellowships, scholarships or work study. It also does not include vocational rehabilitation or other state resources available specifically to people with disabilities. Out-of-pocket expense may be significantly less.