



NURSE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

With the national shortage of nursing professionals projected to reach one million by 2010, as well as the increasing evidence supporting the impact of nursing ratios on patient outcomes, the role of nurse recruitment efforts has become a critical task for nursing leaders throughout the country.

What follows are examples of nurse recruitment strategies from the current literature for your consideration as you brainstorm ideas that can be implemented into your organization's recruitment programs.

HIGH SCHOOL & MIDDLE SCHOOL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

1. Consider sponsoring an annual career day for high school students held at your hospital or a local college. Hospitals throughout the country have found success sponsoring an "All Health Care Career Day", during which each clinical department staffs a booth at local middle and high schools and presents information about their professions in the classrooms.
2. Discuss the feasibility of developing a program with your local high schools in which juniors or seniors can volunteer at your organization, and earn high school credit hours in the process.
3. Invite high school students to your organization for a full day of career shadowing. This would be especially helpful if the student is allowed to shadow in the department in which he/she is most interested.
4. Consider hosting a breakfast or luncheon for middle and high school guidance counselors in your area to promote health care career opportunities.
5. Assess the possibility of creating a program that allows high school students interested in a health care career to be active in the hospital in a department of interest to them. They can work on group projects in a specific area of health care and have the opportunity to job shadow.
6. Explore the possibility of creating affiliation agreements with local school boards which allow the medical and health career students to experience observation and clinical hours.
7. Strive to provide speakers (i.e., nurses employed by your organization) to local elementary, middle and high schools to discuss health care career options.
8. Think about hiring high school students interested in pursuing a career in nursing to sit with patients as "patient companions". Match the students with experienced nurses who mentor and assist the students as they continue their education.



9. Organize occasional meetings with various hospital employees, such as administrators or physicians, to allow high school students interested in health care to discuss their positions and ask questions.
10. Invite students and other interested candidates to movie nights at local theatres hosted by your organization. Set aside time to learn more about the organization.
11. Consider offering a summer internship program for high-risk high school students, who likely would not consider continuing education once they graduate from high school. Choose students who are strong in their science classes to receive an introduction to health care careers, training and work at the hospital.
12. To diversify your organizations' staff, evaluate the feasibility of offering scholarship programs to minority students interested in health careers.

NURSING STUDENT RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

13. Consider assigning each new graduate nurse an individual workplace mentor. Mentors accompany new graduates in an orientation period, meet monthly and serve as an individual teacher and guide. Each pair is eligible for a \$1,000 bonus at the end of the program if all requirements are met.
14. Attempt to provide staff for college and university program advisory committees specifically focused on health care disciplines.
15. Explore creation of a nursing externship program in which nursing students, one year shy of graduation, receive the opportunity to become acquainted with your organization and departments. The externs could rotate through various units to receive broad-based education and exposure to the hospital environment.
16. Consider publishing a newsletter for local student nurses about happenings at your organization.
17. Encourage your advanced practice nurses to teach at local colleges and universities. This can be a wonderful way to identify top students and for students to learn about your organization from an experienced nurse.
18. Create a special peer group for newly graduated nurses. Consider an extra week of training before orientation, and bring the same new nurse graduates back together once every month during their first year of employment.
19. Evaluate offering scholarships to students, employees and community members in areas served by your organization, to be awarded in one-year increments.



20. Consider implementing a 2-3 month long program for students in their last year of nursing school. Pair students with an RN preceptor with whom they spend most of their time at the bedside, working in concert with the best and brightest.
21. Consider paying for students' NCLEX exam and/or licensure fees if they agree to work for your organization upon graduation.
22. Explore the feasibility of adopting a loan forgiveness program designed to assist nurses in repaying outside school loans. Other health care organizations have set rules such as: recipients must have completed their schooling within 5 years of being accepted into the program; nurses must agree to remain employed by your organization for 2 years; nurses who agree to work full-time night shifts are eligible for a higher level of loan forgiveness.

RETURNING NURSE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

23. Evaluate the possibility of paying for refresher courses for nurses returning to the clinical setting after 5 years or more. In return for a commitment to work for your organization, pay for nurses to complete modules through a local university and encourage them to attend in-house educational classes.

"GROW YOUR OWN" RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

24. Consider the option of providing your non-nursing employees with financial and professional support to become RNs. For those who have been employed with the organization for at least one year, fulfilled their prerequisites for nursing school, and have been accepted into a nursing school, consider paying for the employee's tuition, books and fees in addition to a modest monthly stipend. Other such programs tend to require that the employee students continue to work a minimum of 16 hours per pay period within the organization, and maintain a set GPA. Furthermore, employees must commit 2-3 years of employment with the organization after becoming an RN.
25. Explore the possibility of partnering with a local college to allow nurses to complete a two-year bachelor's degree program around their work schedule, with tuition paid for by your healthcare organization. Under this type of program, nurses could attend school two days per week and be able to continue working at the hospital with full benefits and flexible scheduling to meet their educational, family and work needs.
26. Explore collaboration with a local community college, in order to offer a one-year course for employees to increase their education from LPN status to RN status. Consider paying all tuition and books for employees participating, and having the program take place on Friday and Saturday. This allows employees to continue working as LPNs during the week.



27. Consider partnering with a local college to select immigrant students from around the world to enroll in intensive English classes to prepare them for an internship program of their choice. The program provides on sight orientation and training, maintains records, and works with medical center staff on supervision of these students and their assignments. These students come to the hospital with diverse strengths and skills, which make them strong candidates for entry-level positions within a health care system. This program provides on the job training and increases their confidence level in the workforce.
28. If you are located in a rural location without many educational options nearby, consider partnering with a local community college to develop a career advancement distance learning program.

CURRENT EMPLOYEES RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

29. Consider offering a reward to employees who recruit other people, rather than a sign-on bonus to new employees. The employee who helps recruit someone would receive half of his or her bonus after the new employee has worked for 30 days, and the remaining half of the reward after the new employee has been with the organization for one year.
30. Evaluate offering scholarships to hospital employees and their children to provide assistance to persons interested in furthering their education to prepare for jobs in the health care field. It is customary for scholarship recipients to agree to six months of employment for every semester paid for through the program.
31. Aim to allow employee teams to identify ways to improve recruitment in their department. Each team should be encouraged to develop its own agenda and be empowered to implement programs and ideas.

COMMUNITY/MISCELLANEOUS RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

32. Consider giving out mall or department store gift certificates to candidates who interview for nursing positions within your organization.
33. Explore the possibility of conducting interviews in high visibility community areas (i.e. the mall, community recreation centers, etc.).
34. Think about sponsoring a community food night/banquet, hosted by your Director of Nursing or Chief Nursing Officer. This can be a fun and successful recruitment effort with a low cost per hire.
35. Evaluate the feasibility of partnering with a local real estate company that buys and renovates apartment buildings. Your organization will probably be required to guarantee a certain number of people will be living in the buildings in exchange for a competitive



month-to-month rate. In addition, operating a shuttle that goes to the hospital helps defray transportation costs.

36. Consider the feasibility of providing a program for individuals who are transitioning from welfare to work. Participants could join in a number of job skills training classes as well as volunteer in a particular department where they may have a career interest.