



**State University System
2023-2024 Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund
Proposal Form**

University:	University of West Florida
Healthcare Partner:	Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital
Date Proposal Approved by University Board of Trustees:	6/15/2023
Amount Requested:	\$228,000
University Contact (name, title, phone, & email):	David Bellar, Dean Usha Kundu MD College of Health 850-462-5762 dbellar@uwf.edu
Please check the boxes below as appropriate:	<i>All boxes must be checked in order to be eligible to participate.</i>
Healthcare partner making contribution is located in and licensed to operate in Florida?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Healthcare partner making contribution is a healthcare provider as defined in Section 768.38(2), Florida Statutes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Nursing programs met or exceeded a first-time NCLEX passage rate of 70% for the prior year based on the 2023 Accountability Plan?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
The funds will be used for an eligible purpose per section 1009.8962, Florida Statutes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes

Background

The LINE Fund is intended to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and healthcare partners and to meet local, regional, and state workforce demand by recruiting faculty and clinical preceptors, increasing the capacity of high-quality nursing education programs, and increasing the number of nursing education program graduates who are prepared to enter the workforce. Subject to available funds, for every dollar contributed to an institution by a healthcare partner, the fund shall provide a dollar-for-dollar match to the participating institution for approved proposals.

Funds may be used for student scholarships, recruitment of additional faculty, equipment, and simulation centers to advance high-quality nursing education programs throughout the state. Funds may not be used for the construction of new buildings. To participate, an institution must submit a timely and complete proposal to the Board of Governors for consideration. For more details, see Board of Governors [Regulation 8.008 - Nursing Education](#).

Proposals must be submitted with a total of no more than three pages of narrative for the following sections. Proposals with more than three pages of narrative will be rejected.

Proposal Details

Provide a detailed narrative for each section below.

I. Use of Funds - *Describe in detail and with specificity how the institution plans to use the funds, including how the funds will be utilized to increase student enrollment and program completion.*

Currently, a significant shortage of nurses exists in the State of Florida, and projections suggest that the deficit will continue to increase in size in the coming decade. In particular, the Florida panhandle is one of the areas with the most significant shortage. Geographically, the School of Nursing at the University of West Florida (UWF) is well positioned to address the need in the Florida Panhandle. The BSN program at UWF is well respected in the local and regional community and consistently produces graduates who pass the NCLEX on the first attempt. With this track record, an investment in growth and retention of the BSN program student population at UWF is highly likely to impact workforce needs in regional areas.

Currently, the on-campus Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at UWF graduates approximately 120 students per year who enter the workforce. However, these students are recruited from a large area surrounding the campus, potentially limiting the pipeline of students who are entering the workforce with our local healthcare organizations. Thus, having pipeline initiatives that are designed to enhance the likelihood of students being retained in the local area is critical.

The funds from this proposal will be used to help start an initiative to increase nursing student enrollment and create and immersive, educational pipeline for Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital. The proposed program will facilitate 16 UWF bachelors of science in nursing students to complete the final 3 semesters of their education on the Ascension Sacred Heart Campus. This will include didactic education, taught onsite by UWF and also clinical and precepted experiences. These students will be immersed in the sponsor's culture and day to day practices, will have enhanced ability to engage with experienced nurses and hospital administrators, and will have the potential to gain part time employment at Ascension Sacred Heart while enrolled in the nursing program. Further, the movement of these students to another location will free up capacity in the UWF main campus to accept additional nursing students who are qualified for the program. This will result in not only a very strong pipeline partnership between UWF and Ascension Sacred Heart, but also an increase in the enrollment in the nursing program.

Costs:

1. 16 x \$5500 scholarship per semester for each student = \$264,000
2. 16 x UWORLD NCLEX Test Preparation Subscription and NCLEX test waiver = \$16,000
3. \$56,000.00 in faculty stipends to teach courses on location at Ascension Sacred Heart.
4. \$120,000 for new nursing simulation equipment to support the educational needs of students in this pipeline program.

Project Total: \$456,000

Ascension Sacred Heart has agreed to fund \$228,000 of this project. We are requesting \$228,000 in matching funds from the Board of Governors in order to fully fund this project.

II. Onboarding & Retention of Graduates - *Describe in detail and with specificity how the health care partner will onboard and retain graduates.*

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 17.5% of RN's leave their first job in the first year of employment. Healthcare organizations incur high costs due to nursing turnover. A 2020 NSI National Health Care Retention and RN Staffing Report concluded that the average cost for turning over a bedside RN is just over \$44,000. Exit survey data from a recent study¹ suggested that only 40% of Nurses leaving employment felt they had a realistic understanding of their job before onboarding. Based upon this finding and other reports in the literature, it is evident that there is a critical period in the transition between nursing students and first-year nurses. The importance of onboarding is well understood in the Human Resource literature. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, 69% of employees are more likely to stay with an organization for three years if they have had a positive onboarding experience. Additionally, hospitals that have implemented preceptor and mentor programs in the first year of employment for new nurses have seen reductions in the turnover rate of nearly 20%.

Much research has focused on the transition period after employment has already begun. While this period does warrant attention, there is an opportunity to address preparation for the transition to employment earlier when students are near completion. We are proposing to work with our healthcare Partner to provide the start of onboarding during their clinical experiences at Ascension Sacred Heart, targeting the transition to employment before the students graduate. The experience will be facilitated by the immersion with Ascension Sacred Heart on a daily basis, and greater exposure to personnel from all levels of this organization. The goal will be to provide students with a realistic understanding of the job they will have upon graduation, an understanding of the organizational culture and values, and immersive exposure to the day-to-day experiences of nurses at Ascension Sacred Heart. We believe that through this enhanced educational experience, students will be better equipped to handle the transition to nursing practice in the Ascension Sacred Heart system and will be more likely to be retained through the critical window of early career employment.

¹Kurnat-Thoma E, Ganger M, Peterson K, Channell L. Reducing Annual Hospital and Registered Nurse Staff Turnover—A 10-Element Onboarding Program Intervention. *SAGE Open Nursing*. 2017;3. doi:[10.1177/2377960817697712](https://doi.org/10.1177/2377960817697712)

III. Program Expansion - *Describe in detail and with specificity how the funds will expand the institution's nursing education programs to meet local, regional, or state workforce demands. If applicable, include advanced education nursing programs and how the funds will increase the number of faculty and clinical preceptors and planned efforts to utilize the clinical placement process established in Section 14.36, Florida Statutes.*

The funds for the program will be used to expand the UWF BSN program by allowing students to transition on scholarship to our sponsor's campus, freeing up campus resources to support additional student enrollment at UWF. Further, the enhanced exposure to experienced nurses, enhanced NCLEX preparation and financial support is anticipated to increase the program graduation rate and NCLEX success.

In summary, we will produce a greater number of BSN graduates through an increased graduation rate and also enhance enrollment with additional qualified applicants through this program. Further, these students will be well prepared for a career in nursing to address workforce need overall and with our healthcare partner.