



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

University:	University of West Florida
Healthcare Partner:	Baptist Healthcare
Date Proposal Approved by University Board of Trustees:	6/15/2023
Amount Requested:	\$37,000
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 build a pipeline program for the traditional BSN program into Baptist Healthcare. This local hospital system benefited from the 22-23 LINE program, and has an increased engagement with the UWF School of Nursing. We will utilize the funds from this program to further enhance immersive clinical experiences for Nursing students in their final two semesters at Baptist Healthcare. These students will also benefit from additional experience to prepare them for the Baptist workforce both on the Baptist hospital campus and at the UWF main campus.

To increase the engagement of Baptist Healthcare with the traditional BSN program, two clinical cohorts of 8 students (16 students total) will be assigned to complete their final two semesters, clinical rotations and precepted experience with our sponsor. The education of these new students will be supported using funds from this program. Specifically, we will utilize \$16,000.00 to provide UWorld NCLEX preparation subscriptions and an NCLEX fee waiver to ensure that they

have the financial resources to be able to complete the NCLEX successfully. Currently students in the program often struggle to deal with the additional costs that are often incurred by nursing students for NCLEX preparation. With additional support, these students will have opportunities to engage with Baptist Healthcare to enhance their understanding of our partners' organizational culture and practices. They will also be able to engage in additional training and experience developed in consultation with our partner to enhance their ability to be onboarded after graduation.

To ensure that these clinical students have the support to complete the BSN program and successfully onboard as nurses with our healthcare partner, we propose initiating a Funds to Finish (F2F) scholarship program along with the enhanced clinical experience. Targeting financial aid to students as a reward for their success is known to increase graduation rates, and students entering into clinicals have demonstrated their success by completing most of the BSN program. By funding scholarships for students who have completed all but the final clinical component of the BSN program, along with providing a stipend and NCLEX waiver, it is anticipated that all financial barriers will be removed for the students as they approach graduation. It is planned that 16 senior clinical students will be recipients of these F2F scholarships. The students will each receive a scholarship of \$3,000 to cover tuition and fees during the period of their clinical experience. Total funds allocated for F2F scholarships are \$48,000. Additionally, we will use funds from this program to provide students with a fee waiver for the NCLEX examination. This will eliminate the final financial barrier to becoming a registered nurse.

In addition to investing in the students' ability to complete the program, these students will receive an enriched clinical experience with nearly all the clinical education at Baptist Healthcare locations. Baptist Healthcare will meet with the students on location for special professional development and networking events with speakers on their main campus through funds provided by this program. Additionally Baptist Healthcare will be invited to come to the UWF main campus to provide additional encouragement and enrichment for students in the program, and to all UWF nursing students when on the main campus.

Costs:

1. 16 x \$3000 scholarship for each student = \$48,000
2. 4 networking/business development events on Baptist campus = \$10,000
3. 16 x NCLEX Waiver and UWorld (test prep) subscription = \$16,000

Project Total: \$74,000

Baptist Healthcare has agreed to fund \$37,000 of this project. We are requesting \$37,000 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 Baptist Healthcare, targeting the transition to employment before the students graduate. The experience will be facilitated by the professional development and networking opportunities with Baptist Healthcare. 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 Baptist Healthcare locations. We believe that through this enhanced clinical experience, students will be better equipped to handle the transition to nursing practice in the Baptist Healthcare 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 addressing the end of the student lifecycle. Enhancing graduation rate will produce more RN's to fulfill the local workforce needs. Additionally, having students supported on scholarships will help attract more students to consider the UWF Nursing program. Over time this will help to enhance the number of students applying for the UWF BSN program, which is incredibly important in a time where nursing school applications are on the decline.

In summary, we will produce a greater number of BSN graduates through an increased graduation rate. The UWF BSN program has consistently produced very high NCLEX pass rates. Therefore, as the pipeline of new BSN students is strengthened, the educational preparation of the students will ensure that these retained students will pass the NCLEX and become an RN. Further, these students will be well prepared for a career in nursing to address workforce need overall and with our healthcare partner.