

# **CAREER GUIDE FOR REGISTERED NURSES**

SOC Code: 29-1111

Pay Band(s): 4, 5, 6 ([Salary Structure](#))

**Standard Occupational Description:** Assess patient health problems and needs, develop and implement nursing care plans, and maintain medical records. Administer nursing care to ill, injured, convalescent, or disabled patients. May advise patients on health maintenance and disease prevention or provide case management. Licensing or registration required. Includes advance practice nurses such as: nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse midwives, and certified registered nurse anesthetists. Advanced practice nursing is practiced by RNs who have specialized formal, post-basic education and who function in highly autonomous and specialized roles. Must be a graduate from an accredited School of Nursing.

Registered Nursing positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Nursing/Physicians' Assistant Career Group](#):

[Registered Nurse I](#)

[Registered Nurse II/Nurse Practitioner I/Physician Assistant](#)

[Registered Nurse III/Nurse Practitioner II](#)

[Registered Nurse Manager I](#)

[Registered Nurse Manager II](#)

While Registered Nurses within the Commonwealth are all located within the Nursing/Physicians Assistant Career Group, individuals may want to pursue other opportunities within the Commonwealth depending upon individual training, education, knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests.

Other Career Group(s) that may be of interest are:

[Program Administration](#)

[General Administration](#)

[Policy Analysis and Planning](#)

[Health Care Compliance](#)

[Emergency Services](#)

## **SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS**

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

### **Skills**

**Note:** *The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for **Registered Nurses** commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

1. Talking to others to convey information effectively.
2. Actively looking for ways to help people.
3. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
4. Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

5. Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
6. Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
7. Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
8. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
9. Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
10. Using scientific rules and methods to solve problems.
11. Applying professional nursing techniques and devices used in wide range of nursing procedures.

## **Knowledge**

**Note:** *The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for **Registered Nurses** commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

### **The Knowledge of:**

1. The information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.
2. Plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
3. Principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
4. The chemical composition, structure, and properties of substances and of the chemical processes and transformations that they undergo. This includes uses of chemicals and their interactions, danger signs, production techniques, and disposal methods.
5. The principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.
6. Human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.
7. The structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
8. The principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.
9. Business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
10. Media production, communication, and dissemination techniques and methods. This includes alternative ways to inform and entertain via written, oral, and visual media.
11. Age specific quality nursing care to all patients through the nursing process and standards of nursing practice.

12. Professional nursing principles and practices, medication indications, actions, reactions and interactions.

### **Abilities**

**Note:** *The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for **Registered Nurses** commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

The **Ability** to:

1. Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
2. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
3. Tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
4. Read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
5. Communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
6. Combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).
7. Arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).
8. See details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
9. Remember information such as words, numbers, pictures, and procedures.
10. Speak clearly so others can understand you.
11. Apply the principles, practices and procedures of professional nursing.
12. Recognize potential patient problems.
13. Make assessments, observe, record and evaluate patient's response to treatment.

### **Tasks**

**Note:** *The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by **Registered Nurses**. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.*

1. Consult and coordinate with health care team members to assess, plan, implement and evaluate patient care plans.
2. Maintain accurate, detailed reports and records.
3. Modify patient treatment plans as indicated by patients' responses and conditions.
4. Monitor all aspects of patient care, including diet and physical activity.
5. Monitor, record and report symptoms and changes in patients' conditions.
6. Observe nurses and visit patients to ensure that proper nursing care is provided.
7. Prepare patients for, and assist with, examinations and treatments.
8. Prepare rooms, sterile instruments, equipment and supplies, and ensure that stock of supplies is maintained.
9. Provide health care, first aid, immunizations and assistance in convalescence and rehabilitation in locations such as schools, hospitals, and industry.
10. Record patients' medical information and vital signs.
11. Perform direct patient care, administer medications according to the prescribed MD order.
12. Serve as Team Leader or perform Charge Nurse role.
13. Collaborate with the ancillary departments and other members of the health care team
14. Maintains high standards of professional conduct.

12. Plan, organize, coordinate, implement and evaluate nursing care delivery.
13. Evaluate, supervise and provide guidance in performance of LPN and C.N.A.

## **INTERESTED?**

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

The nursing occupation is Social, Investigative and Realistic. **Social** occupations frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations often involve helping or providing service to others.

**Investigative** occupations frequently involve working with ideas, and require an extensive amount of thinking. These occupations can involve searching for facts and figuring out problems mentally.

**Realistic** occupations frequently involve work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. They often deal with plants, animals, and real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery. Many of the occupations require working outside, and do not involve a lot of paperwork or working closely with others.

## **LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

This is required for all Registered Nursing positions in state government.

The Department of Labor states that in all States and the District of Columbia, students must graduate from an approved nursing program and pass a national licensing examination in order to obtain a nursing license. Nurses may be licensed in more than one State, either by examination, by the endorsement of a license issued by another State, or through a multi-State licensing agreement. All States require periodic renewal of licenses, which may involve continuing education.

Specific information on the licensing process in Virginia is available on the Department of Health Professions web site at [www.dhp.state.va.us](http://www.dhp.state.va.us)

## **EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

For a national listing of BSN, graduate, and accelerated nursing programs, contact The American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 1 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036, or on the web at <http://www.aacn.nche.edu>

Information on Registered Nursing programs in Virginia colleges and universities is available on the web site for the State Council of Higher Education at [http://research.schev.edu/degreeinventory/inventory\\_2.asp?from=students](http://research.schev.edu/degreeinventory/inventory_2.asp?from=students)

Detailed career and educational information for nursing and other health care professions is available in the “Health Careers Manual“, located on the web site for the Virginia Area Health Education Centers Program at <http://www.ahec.vcu.edu/hcmanual.htm>.

According to the Department of Labor:

There are three major educational paths to registered nursing: a bachelor’s of science degree in nursing (BSN), an associate degree in Nursing (ADN), and a diploma. BSN programs, offered by colleges and universities, take about 4 years to complete. In 2002, 678 nursing programs offered degrees at the bachelor’s level. ADN programs, offered by community and junior colleges, take about 2 to 3 years to complete. About 700 RN programs in 2002 were at the ADN level. Diploma programs, administered in hospitals, last about 3 years. Only a small and declining number of programs offer diplomas. Generally, licensed graduates of any of the three types of educational programs qualify for entry-level positions as staff nurses.

Registered nurses (RNs) work to promote health, prevent disease, and help patients cope with illness. They are advocates and health educators for patients, families, and communities. When providing direct patient care, they observe, assess, and record symptoms, reactions, and progress in patients; assist physicians during surgeries, treatments, and examinations; administer medications; and assist in convalescence and rehabilitation. RNs also develop and manage nursing care plans, instruct patients and their families in proper care, and help individuals and groups take steps to improve or maintain their health. While State laws govern the tasks that RNs may perform, it is usually the work setting that determines their daily job duties.

*Hospital nurses* form the largest group of nurses. Most are staff nurses, who provide bedside nursing care and carry out medical regimens. They also may supervise licensed practical nurses and nursing aides. Hospital nurses usually are assigned to one department, such as surgery, maternity, pediatrics, the emergency room, intensive care, or the treatment of cancer patients. Some may rotate among departments.

*Office nurses* care for outpatients in physicians’ offices, clinics, ambulatory surgical centers, and emergency medical centers. They prepare patients for, and assist with, examinations; administer injections and medications; dress wounds and incisions; assist with minor surgery; and maintain records. Some also perform routine laboratory and office work.

*Nursing care facility nurses* manage care for residents with conditions ranging from a fracture to Alzheimer’s disease. Although they often spend much of their time on administrative and supervisory tasks, RNs also assess residents’ health, develop treatment plans, supervise licensed practical nurses and nursing aides, and perform invasive procedures, such as starting intravenous fluids. They also work in specialty-care departments, such as long-term rehabilitation units for patients with strokes and head injuries.

*Home health nurses* provide nursing services to patients at home. RNs assess patients’ home environments and instruct patients and their families. Home health nurses care for a broad range of patients, such as those recovering from illnesses and accidents, cancer, and childbirth. They must be able to work independently and may supervise home health aides.

*Public health nurses* work in government and private agencies, including clinics, schools, retirement communities, and other community settings. They focus on populations, working with individuals, groups, and families to improve the overall health of communities. They also work

with communities to help plan and implement programs. Public health nurses instruct individuals, families, and other groups regarding health issues such as preventive care, nutrition, and childcare. They arrange for immunizations, blood pressure testing, and other health screening. These nurses also work with community leaders, teachers, parents, and physicians in community health education.

*Public health nurses* promote and protect the health of populations using knowledge from nursing, social and public health sciences. Public health nurses provide population focused, community oriented nursing practice. The goal is the prevention of disease and disability for all people through the creation of conditions in which people can be healthy. Public health nurses partner with states, communities, organizations, and groups, as well as individuals, in completing health assessment, policy development and assurance activities. Public health nurses practice in both public and private agencies. Public health nurses assess the needs and strengths of population, design interventions to mobilize resources for action, and promote equal opportunity for health. Strong, effective organizational and political skills must complement their nursing and public health experience. (Taken from the Scope and Standards of Public Health Nursing Practice written by the Quad Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations, published by the American Nurses Association 1999.)

*Occupational health nurses*, also called *industrial nurses*, provide nursing care at worksites to employees, customers, and others with injuries and illnesses. They give emergency care, prepare accident reports, and arrange for further care if necessary. They also offer health counseling, conduct health examinations and inoculations, and assess work environments to identify potential or actual health problems.

*Head nurses* or *nurse supervisors* direct nursing activities, primarily in hospitals. They plan work schedules and assign duties to nurses and aides, provide or arrange for training, and visit patients to observe nurses and to ensure that the patients receive proper care. They also may ensure that records are maintained and equipment and supplies are ordered.

At the advanced level, *nurse practitioners* provide basic, primary healthcare. They diagnose and treat common acute illnesses and injuries. Nurse practitioners also can prescribe medications—but certification and licensing requirements vary by State. Other advanced practice nurses include *clinical nurse specialists*, *certified registered nurse anesthetists*, and *certified nurse midwives*. Advanced practice nurses must meet educational and clinical practice requirements beyond the basic nursing education and licensing required of all RNs.

## **COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES**

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

### **The Commonwealth Competencies are:**

1. Technical and Functional Expertise

2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: [http://jobs.state.va.us/cc\\_planningctr.htm](http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm). For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

## **COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH**

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example:

PAY BAND	PRACTITIONER ROLES	MANAGEMENT ROLES
3	Licensed Practical Nurse	
4	Registered Nurse I	
5	Registered Nurse II Nurse Practitioner I Physician Assistant	Registered Nurse Manager I
6	Registered Nurse III Nurse Practitioner II	Registered Nurse Manager II

## Sample Career Path

### [Registered Nurse I](#)

The Registered Nurse I role provides career tracks for registered nurses performing responsibilities ranging from entry level to journey level. Employees' responsibilities include providing professional nursing care and treatment to patients by conducting needs assessments, developing, implementing and evaluating treatment plans and providing patient care and education through case management.

### [Registered Nurse II/Nurse Practitioner I/Physician Assistant](#)

The Registered Nurse II/Nurse Practitioner I/Physician Assistant role provides career tracks for registered nurses, certified nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. The first career track is for registered nurses whose responsibilities range from advanced level focusing in a specialty area of nursing or research to having either charge or supervisory responsibilities. The second career track is for certified nurse practitioners performing entry level to journey level responsibilities that require an advanced level of nursing certification and license. The third career track is for physician assistants performing entry to advanced responsibilities that require training and license as a physician assistant.

### [Registered Nurse III/Nurse Practitioner II](#)

The Registered Nurse III/Nurse Practitioner II role provides career tracks for registered nurses and the certified nurse practitioners. The first career track is for registered nurses that provide expert nursing services or statewide nursing program consultation, typically for a medical specialty area. Some employees may require advanced education and/or certification as a Registered Clinical Nurse Specialist. The second career track is for certified nurse practitioners performing responsibilities that require an advanced level of certification and/or license as a Certified Nurse Practitioner.

### [Registered Nurse Manager I](#)

The Registered Nurse Manager I role provides career tracks for management-level registered nurses responsible for a component or multiple components of a nursing program. Responsibilities include leadership and management of nurses, programs, resources, and research programs.

### [Registered Nurse Manager II](#)

The Registered Nurse Manager II role provides career tracks for nurses having management-level responsibilities for all aspects of a comprehensive nursing program.

## **ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:**

Virginia State Board of Nursing  
<http://www.dhp.state.va.us/nursing/default.htm>

National League for Nursing  
<http://www.nln.org>

American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
<http://www.aacn.nche.edu>

American Nurses Association

<http://www.nursingworld.org>

State Council of Higher Education (Degreed programs for nursing)

[http://research.schev.edu/degreeinventory/inventory\\_2.asp?from=students](http://research.schev.edu/degreeinventory/inventory_2.asp?from=students)

O\*NET (Occupational Information Network)

[http://online.onetcenter.org/gen\\_search\\_page](http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page)

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network

<http://www.vacrn.net/>