



What to Expect as a Rural Nursing Education Program (RNEP) Student

RNEP Background

The Rural Nursing Education Program (RNEP) is designed for individuals who live and work in rural communities and want to become Registered Nurses (RNs) while staying close to home. Students are nominated to RNEP by their local Critical Access Hospital (CAH) or Rural Health Clinic (RHC) and earn a nursing degree through RNEP's academic partners. The program is funded through grants administered by the Washington State Department of Health.

Rural areas across Washington face serious nursing shortages. RNEP was created to help rural residents—people who already understand their community's needs—become nurses where they live. By completing this program, you are not only advancing your education and career—you are strengthening healthcare access in your hometown.

Student Commitment

RNEP is more than a nursing program—it is a commitment to your community. By joining, you agree to:

- Live and learn locally: You will remain in your rural community for most of your classes and clinical experiences.
- Work with your local healthcare facility: Your CAH or RHC partners with RNEP to provide clinical learning, mentoring, and support.
- Commit to rural nursing practice: After graduation, you agree to work as a Registered Nurse in a rural community.

Program Structure and Expectations

Online Coursework

Most nursing theory courses are taught online through our academic partners. You will need reliable internet access and comfort using a computer for assignments, quizzes, and discussions.

Clinical Practice

You will complete hands-on clinical experiences at your local hospital or clinic whenever possible, with some required travel to regional simulation or lab sites.

Time Commitment

Expect to spend an average of:

- 10–15 hours per week on coursework, readings, and assignments
- 8–12 hours per week in clinical or skills practice (varies by semester)

Additional time for group meetings or online discussions.

Nursing school is demanding. Planning ahead for work, study, and personal responsibilities will be essential. RNEP offers wraparound support services to promote the success of nursing students.

Program Duration

RNEP follows the academic partner's degree pathway, completed in two academic years after prerequisites are met.

Support Available

Each student is connected with an RNEP Student Support Specialist who provides guidance with academic planning, study skills, tutoring referrals, and life balance strategies.

What You Will Need to Succeed

Success in this program starts with:

- A strong commitment to learning and professional growth.
- The ability to communicate regularly by email and attend scheduled online sessions.
- Dependability and accountability in meeting deadlines and attending clinicals.
- Self-motivation and time management skills.
- A willingness to ask for help and use available support resources

Your Commitment Matters

By applying to RNEP, you acknowledge that:

- You understand the time, communication, and clinical participation expectations.
- You are prepared to engage fully in online learning and local practice experiences.
- You are dedicated to completing the program and serving a rural community after graduation.