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NextStep Blended-Learning Certified Nursing Assistant Training Approved in Washington State

Tuition-free, blended-learning training-to-placement program makes it easy for anyone to become a CNA and creates new career paths for displaced workers.

SEATTLE, February 23, 2020 – [NextStep](#), an innovative digital healthcare training and job placement company, today announced approval by the Washington State Department of Health for its certified nursing assistant (CNA) training-to-placement program. By blending app-based and in-person learning, this program makes it easy for workers in Washington state who have been displaced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to retrain for careers in health care.

According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), there are about 35,000 CNAs in Washington, and the profession was growing rapidly even before COVID-19. The pandemic has now put an additional strain on health care industry staffing and the demand for CNAs will become even greater. NextStep's unique program addresses critical staffing shortages by creating an easy, flexible path to certification that is tuition-free for students. NextStep's graduates are guaranteed a job with one of its respected employer partners upon certification.

"Washington has been at the forefront in addressing the challenges of this pandemic, particularly related to the virus, education and employment," said Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck. "Trained healthcare workers are a vital resource, and their value is particularly evident this year as they deliver compassionate care on the front lines. Being able to offer quality training in a way that is no-cost to the student and facilitates job placement is a great option for our state."

In December 2020, the Washington state unemployment rate was 7.1 percent, due to workers across several industries, particularly hospitality, being displaced since the beginning of the pandemic. These workers have transferable skills well-suited for health care. NextStep recruits people who are unemployed or working low-wage jobs, prepares them for rewarding health care careers and then places them with employers in dire need of CNAs. The Washington State Department of Health has approved virtual skills and clinical training with remote video review and feedback by accredited nurse experts employed by NextStep.

"Demand for skilled nursing assistants will grow, even after the pandemic subsides," said NextStep CEO Chris Hedrick. "Washington state government support of innovative approaches to developing workers in health care benefits Washingtonians seeking high-quality new careers. In Colorado, we have shown the value our blended-learning nursing assistant training and job placement program delivers. We are excited to bring this program to Washington."

"Avamere is excited to grow their business partnership with NextStep in the state of Washington to assist our senior care communities with the critical need for compassionate certified nursing assistants," said

Lisa Marie May, senior director of talent acquisition for Avamere. “Our mission is to enhance the lives of everyone we serve, including our dedicated team members. We look forward to welcoming our first NextStep CNAs beginning in early 2021.”

Since launching in Colorado last year, NextStep has quickly become the leading CNA training and job placement program in the state. Developed with the world’s leading caregiving experts, NextStep’s blended-learning program combines digital content delivered online or via mobile app with in-person practice labs and on-the-job clinical experiences. The NextStep course in Washington state can be completed in around eight weeks.

Workers not only receive training but also benefit from industry-recognized, state certification and job placement services with respected employer partners. After graduating from the NextStep CNA program, students are placed in jobs at long-term care, skilled nursing and senior living facilities across the state. NextStep is approved by the Washington State Department of Health and currently enrolling students at www.nextstep.com. NextStep was founded in Seattle in collaboration with [Pioneer Square Labs](#), the northwest’s leading startup studio.

About NextStep:

[NextStep](#) is an innovative health care education and job placement company helping solve the accelerating caregiver crisis in the United States. We train and place workers displaced by automation and artificial intelligence with respected long-term care providers, benefiting both. NextStep’s blended-learning certified nursing assistant (CNA) program gives learners the opportunity to start a new, rewarding career and provides employers a solution to their critical workforce needs. We also offer continuing education courses and the National COVID-Ready Caregiver Certification, which equips caregivers with the knowledge to keep themselves and those they care for safe during the pandemic.