



IOWA NURSING DEMAND SURVEY REPORT

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A PROJECT OF:

IOWA BOARD OF NURSING
AND
IOWA CENTER FOR NURSING
WORKFORCE

IN COOPERATION WITH:

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

THE NURSING DEMAND SURVEY REPORT IS A PROJECT OF:

IOWA BOARD OF NURSING



IOWA CENTER FOR NURSING WORKFORCE



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Introduction

Like no other year before it in modern history, the importance and relevance of nurses in the healthcare setting came to the forefront during the COVID-19 pandemic response in 2020. Coincidentally, 2020 had also been designated as the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife by the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board and endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2019 (WHO, 2019). The year chosen to celebrate nurses on the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale – world renowned nurse researcher, nursing pioneer and wartime heroine – turned into a year where all nurses were recognized for their dedication, innovation, drive and willingness to war against an unknown viral enemy. It was a hard-earned year of recognition for the nursing profession.

In addition to the WHO's search for data about the *international* nursing workforce through their survey processes, in the United States (U.S.) the desire for accurate nursing workforce data is also sought after by nurse educators, nurse and health workforce leaders and those who hold policymaking positions. The Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), an agency under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has conducted a survey of nurses since 1977 – its tenth cycle in 2018 – called the National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses (NSSRN). The survey is performed to fulfill the goals of congressional mandates aimed at understanding “the characteristics and distribution of RNs throughout the United States, including education, employment, licensing and certification, and demographics” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).

Another data source is the survey conducted by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) and the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers (the Forum) who have collaborated on a biennial national survey since 2013, to gather nursing supply data (Smiley, et.al, 2019). The NCSBN/Forum sample is gathered from the information reported to NCSBN's Nursys® database by the state boards of nursing. Additionally, individual state nursing workforce centers conduct their own research to assist with nursing workforce predictions (Iowa Center for Nursing Workforce, 2019).

In Iowa, during the professional licensure process through the Iowa Board of Nursing (IBON), registered nurses are asked their education, employment, and demographic information in a survey format at each three year renewal. Considered nursing supply data, the start of consistent nursing supply information began with the launch of a new licensure system by the IBON in November 2012. Also started at the same time was the development of the Iowa Center for Nursing Workforce (the Center) and the hiring of staff who has reported about the nursing supply in Iowa through the *Nursing Trends* report first issued by the Center in 2013. Many earlier Iowa health workforce studies included nurses and were generally produced through the Iowa Department of Public Health staff dated back to 2006 (IDPH, 2006).

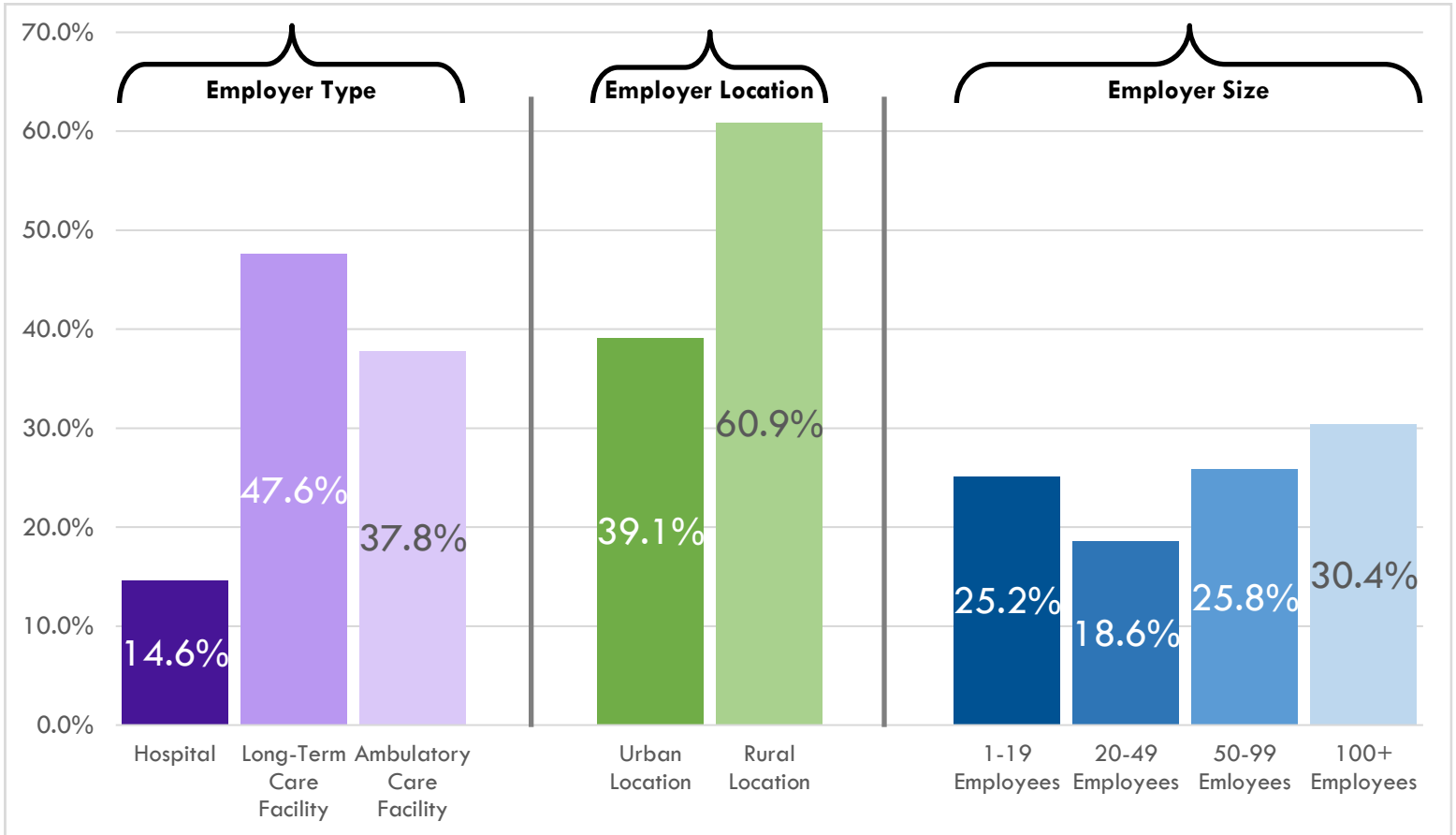
Therefore, historical *supply* information has been gathered, but no single source of nursing workforce *demand* data has been conducted, specifically by the Center. There is historical evidence suggesting that nursing shortages have existed in Iowa on and off for 30 years; or at least the distribution of nurses, where needed, has appeared short. Anecdotal reports of nursing shortages have been verbally reported to the Center across geographical pockets in Iowa over the last eight years; and as of the release of this report, the demand across the state is great and the shortage is reported as widespread.

This report is the first of its kind analyzing the *demand* of nurses in the State of Iowa, conducted by the Iowa Center for Nursing Workforce under the Iowa Board of Nursing in partnership with Iowa Workforce Development, Labor Market Information Division. Ironically, the survey was launched in the Year of the Nurse and right as the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. As the war against the pandemic continues, the authors hope the insight and results provided in this report will contribute to the overall understanding about the needed demand for more nurses, how employers are handling the current employment situation, and the importance of nurses' contribution to a strong healthcare workforce.

References

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Demographics of Survey Respondents: (767 Total Surveys)



Nursing Demand Survey

Starting February 2020 through mid-September 2020 Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) in cooperation with the Iowa Board of Nursing collected surveys from employers in the State of Iowa who employ nurses. The purpose of the survey was to gauge what the demand for nurses in Iowa is, potential shortages, and barriers in recruitment and retention. The survey was hosted by IWD online. A survey request letter was mailed to 2,547 locations. The locations were chosen by the industry classification of the organization.

Three industry classifications were chosen as the targets for receiving a survey request letter. Those classifications were determined to be the largest employers of nurses and included: hospitals, long-term care facilities, and ambulatory care facilities.

- 2,547 locations were sent a letter, 184 were returned due to bad addresses, for a total of 2,363 contacts
- 793 locations are represented in the survey
- Response rate of the survey is estimated at 33.6%

376 surveys were collected on or after March 15, 2020 — representing the COVID-19 Pandemic time period

All locations in the State of Iowa which were within one of the three identified industry classifications and had five or more employees were sent an invitation to participate in the 2020 Iowa Nursing Demand Survey. Surveys were collected between February 2020 and September 2020. The demographic breakout of survey respondents can be seen in the chart above.



Employer Type

The largest percentage (47.6%) of survey respondents are classified as long-term care facilities. These include: assisted living facilities for the elderly; continuing care retirement communities; skilled nursing care facilities; residential intellectual & development disability facilities; and residential mental health & substance abuse facilities



Employer Location

Nearly 61 percent of survey respondents are located in rural areas. These are classified as any location with a non-metro ZIP Code.



Employer Size

A slight majority (30.4%) of survey respondents are locations with 100+ employees.

Section One

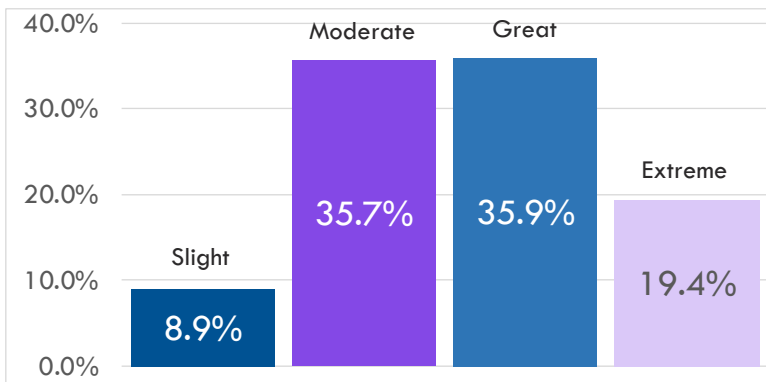
Shortages & Recruiting

Overview

One purpose of the 2020 Nursing Demand Survey was to determine if there is a nursing shortage in the State of Iowa; that is, does Iowa have a situation where the demand for nursing professionals exceeds the supply? Survey respondents were asked: *Is there a shortage of qualified job applicants for nursing positions?* Nearly three-fifths (58.5%) of respondents stated, “yes.”

Those that find that there is a current shortage were asked to define the degree. The breakout of their responses is below.

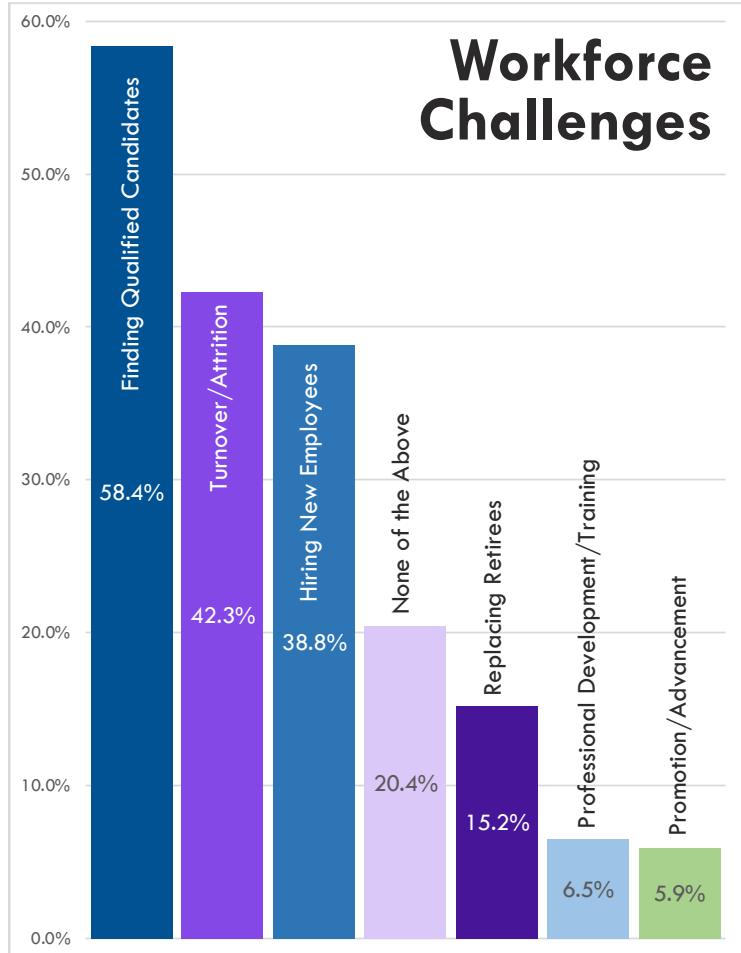
The shortage is:



“ I think there is an extreme shortage

of nurses in Iowa. Assisted living and long-term care facilities are battling to pay higher wages and because the work/life balance isn't as attractive as it is to work in a clinic or hospital that also makes things difficult...

”



Finding Qualified Candidates

Is the number one workforce challenge reported by respondents with nearly three-fifths (57.4%) indicating this has been an issue in the last 12 months.



Turnover/Attrition

This is the second greatest workforce challenge, with 42.3 percent of respondents selecting it as an issue.



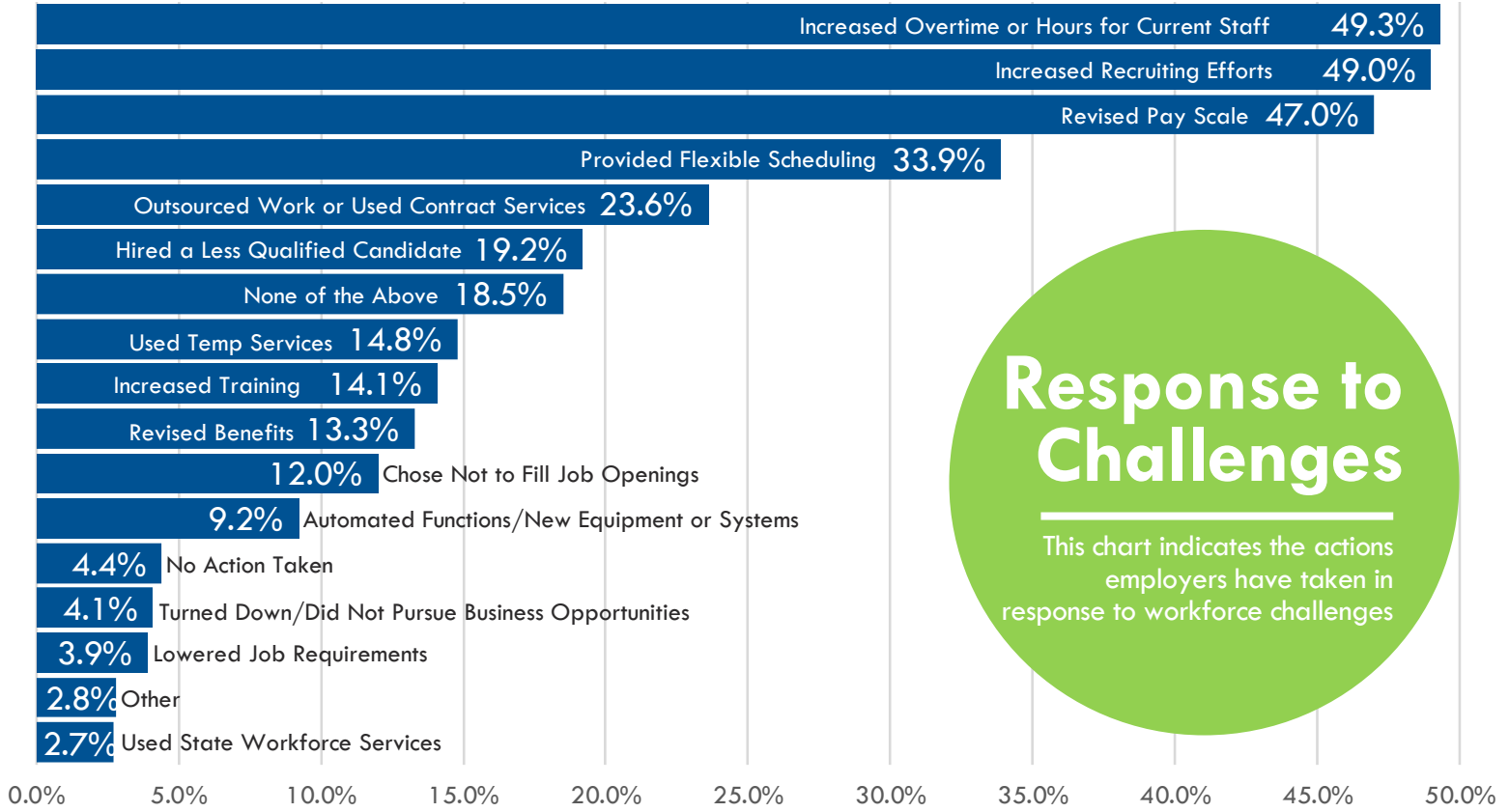
Hiring New Employees

Due to cost, available budget, and competition the process and ability of hiring new employees is the third greatest workforce challenge reported (38.6%).



Respondents were asked to define the biggest workforce challenges they have faced in the last 12 months in regards to nursing positions. [The top results to this question can be seen in the 'Workforce Challenges' chart above.](#) Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers to this question, therefore, the percentage total will exceed 100 percent.

Among those that answered “Other” the top write-in answers were: unable to get nurse candidates to work in a rural location; pay rates offered are not competitive; candidates are unwilling to work evenings/weekends; and competition (i.e. being close to a large hospital).



Response to Challenges

This chart indicates the actions employers have taken in response to workforce challenges

Response to Workforce Challenges

Respondents were asked to share what steps have been taken at their location in response to nursing workforce challenges. The results to this question can be seen in the 'Response to Challenges' chart above. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers to this question, therefore, the percentage total will exceed 100 percent.

Among those that answered "Other" the top write-in answers were:

- Implemented sign-on bonus and/or referral bonus program
- Hired more qualified applicants
- Offered tuition reimbursement as a benefit of employment

“ I think a focus on preventing nurse burn-out

would help retain bedside nurses. I think nurses pursue non-bedside jobs because they love what they do but burn out and can no longer continue working the way they do.

”

Top 3 Responses



Increasing Overtime or Hours for Current Staff

Is the number one response to nursing workforce challenges among respondents. Nearly half (49.3%) indicated they do or have done this.



Increasing Recruiting Efforts

Is the second most indicated response, according to survey takers, with 49 percent indicating they currently are doing this or have done this.



Revising the Pay Scale

The third top response (47.0%) among survey takers in regards to how to respond to workforce challenges was revising the pay scale in order to attract applicants and retain current staff.

Top Difficulties Filling Vacancies

Vacancies

Respondents were given a number of potential reasons their location may have difficulty filling nursing vacancies (results in chart below). They were asked to rate these reasons from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The following three reasons were those which had the greatest percentage of respondents **agree or strongly agree** were difficulties in filling nursing openings.



A General Lack of Applicants

Over two-thirds (69.2%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they have difficulty filling nursing openings due to just a general lack of applicants for their available positions.



Local Competition

This reason had the second greatest percentage (60.2%) of respondents indicate that they agreed or strongly agreed this was a problem for them in hiring nurses



Expected Wages

Nearly half (49.9%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the wages expected by applicants or what applicants are willing to accept has made filling nursing positions difficult.

Least of the Issues

Of the reasons respondents were given to rate, some had a slight majority of survey takers indicate that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was a contributing problem for them in filling nursing positions at their location (results in chart below).

The following three reasons were those which had the greatest percentage of respondents **disagree or strongly disagree** were difficulties in filling nursing vacancies. Additionally, each of these reasons had the greatest percentage of respondents rate the issue as "neutral".



Type of Work Involved

Nearly two-fifths (38.8%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the nature of the work involved in nursing occupations made it difficult to fill openings. Only 21.7 percent agreed or strongly agreed that it contributed to the problem.



Hours or Shifts Offered

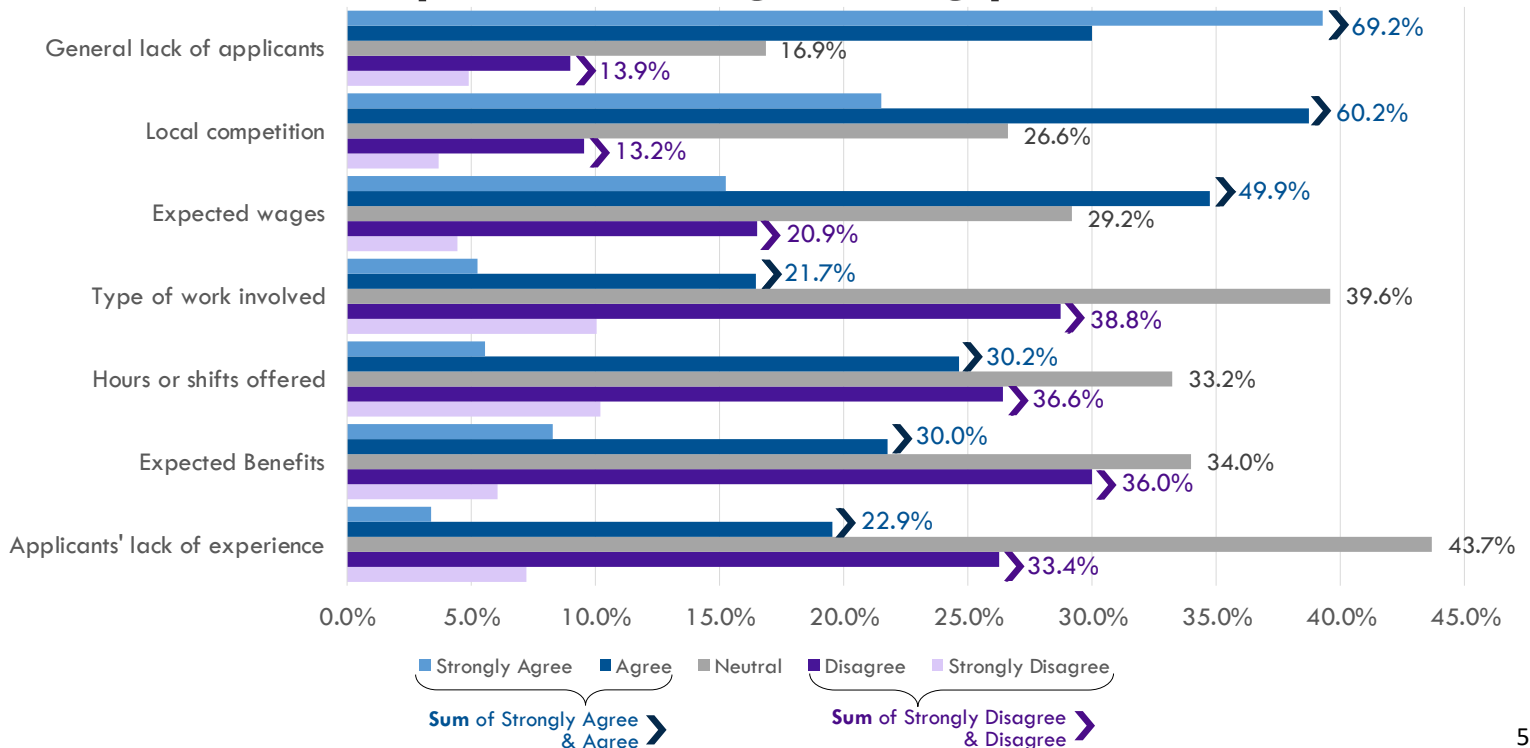
Many respondents (36.6%) also disagreed or strongly disagreed that the hours and/or shifts available to applicants had a negative effect on filling nursing positions. However, nearly one-third (30.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that this had an adverse impact.

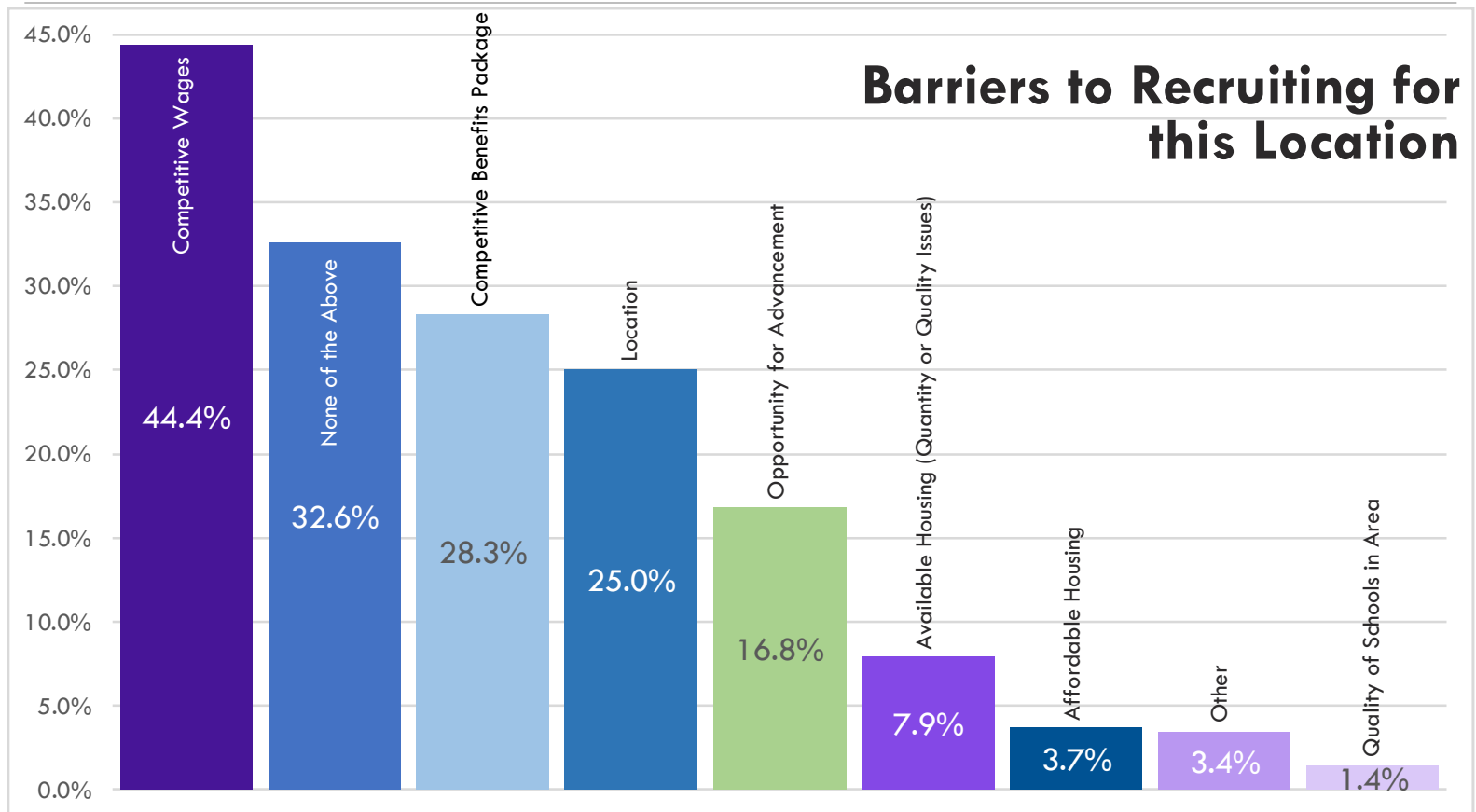


Expected Benefits

More than one-third (36.0%) of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the benefits expected by applicants made filling nursing positions difficult.

We often have a problem filling nursing positions due to...





Barriers to Recruiting

Respondents were asked to share what barriers they have encountered when recruiting nurses at their location. The results to this question can be seen in the ‘Barrier to Recruiting for this Location’ chart above. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers to this question, therefore, the percentage total will exceed 100 percent.

Among those that answered “Other” the top write-in answers were:

- Candidates are unwilling to work evenings and/or weekends
- Candidates lack experience in specialized areas
- Proximity of location to a large hospital (i.e. local competition)
- Travel requirements of the position

“ As a small employer, it is very hard to compete with larger companies wages and benefits, especially government jobs. Many nurses are now getting BSN or master’s degrees and want to be paid more for this work, however, not all jobs require BSN or greater. ”

“ There are not enough experienced nurses to fill the knowledge gaps from retirements. ”

Retirements

In addition to nursing shortages, workforce challenges, and recruitment issues the aging nursing workforce also has an impact on the availability of nurses in Iowa.

Survey respondents were asked how many nurses retired at their location in the last 12 months and how many nurses are eligible to retire, at their location, in the next 12 months.



Retirees in the Last 12 Months

To this question, 185 of 776 survey takers responded that they had nurses retire in the last year; equating to a total of 397 nurses or an average of 2.1 nurses per location.



Retirees in the Next 12 Months

To this question, 234 of 776 survey takers responded that they had nurses who are eligible to retire in the next year; equating to a total of 569 nurses or an average of 2.4 nurses per location.

Section Two

Licensed Practical Nurses

Overview

Survey participants were asked about openings, expected changes in employment, and recruitment issues for several different nursing titles. This section reviews the survey results in those areas for the occupation of licensed practical nurse (LPN). Each area is examined by employer type, employer location, and employer size.

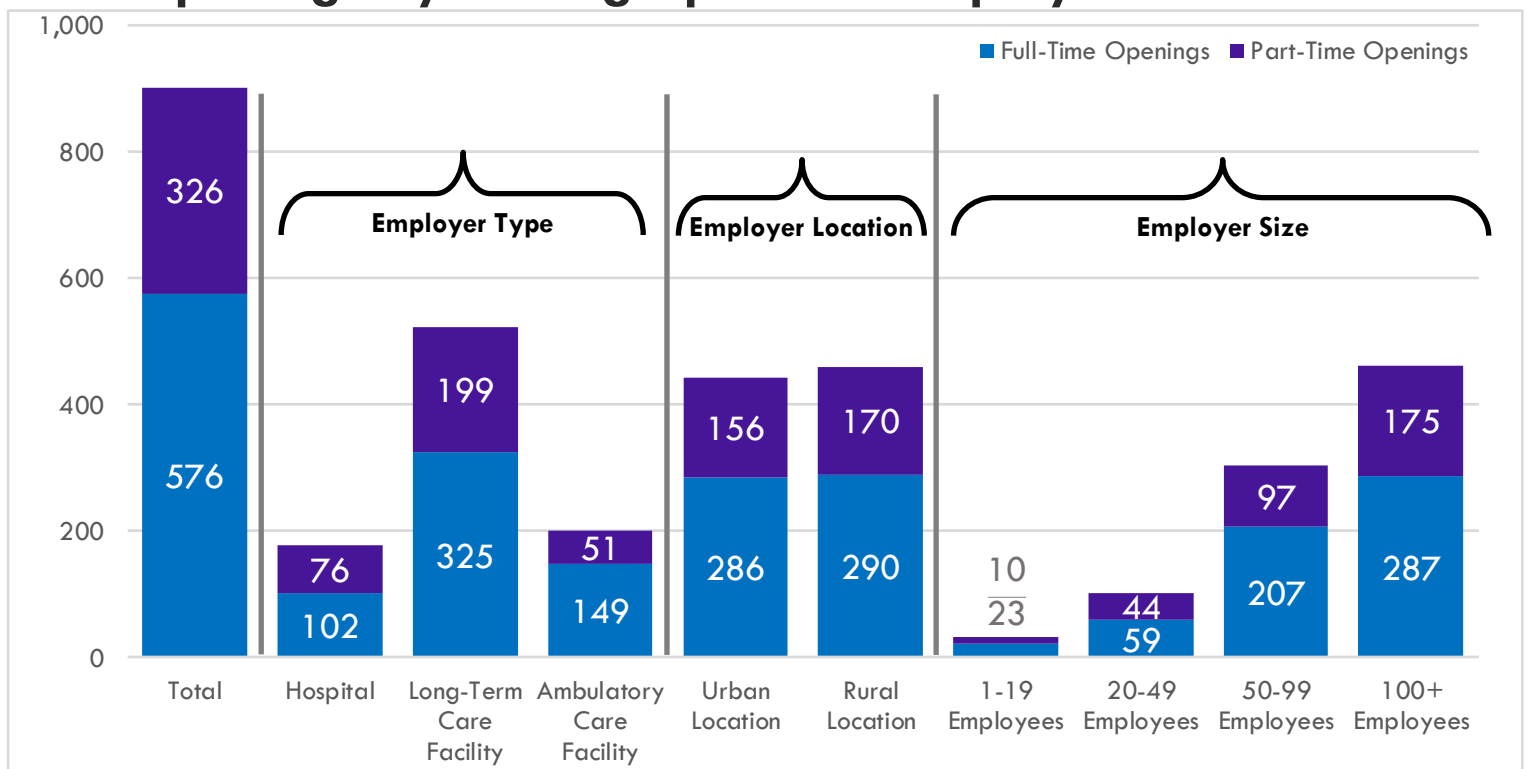
LPN Openings

Survey participants were asked: Does this location have current openings for LPNs? To this question, 298 respondents (38.4%) answered “yes.”

Of this group, over two-thirds (69.1%) of respondents represent long-term care facilities. Additionally, among those that answered “yes” a majority were located in a rural area (62.4%) versus an urban area (37.6%). Finally, in regards to the demographics of these respondents, the majority were mid-to-large sized employers with 38.9 percent of respondents answering “yes” having 50-99 employees and 37.6 percent having 100+ employees.

These respondents reported a total of 902 current LPN openings. Of these 63.9 percent were full-time positions and 36.1 percent were part-time. Lastly, less than one percent (0.44%) of all reported openings (4) were for contract/travel/agency LPNs. Openings by employer type, employer location, and employer size are detailed in the following chart.

LPN Openings by Demographics of Employer



Employer Type

Long-term care facilities represent the largest portion (69.1%) of respondents who reported current LPN openings. Likewise, the greatest number of total openings reported (524 of 902) were at long-term care facilities; representing 58.1 percent of all LPN openings reported.



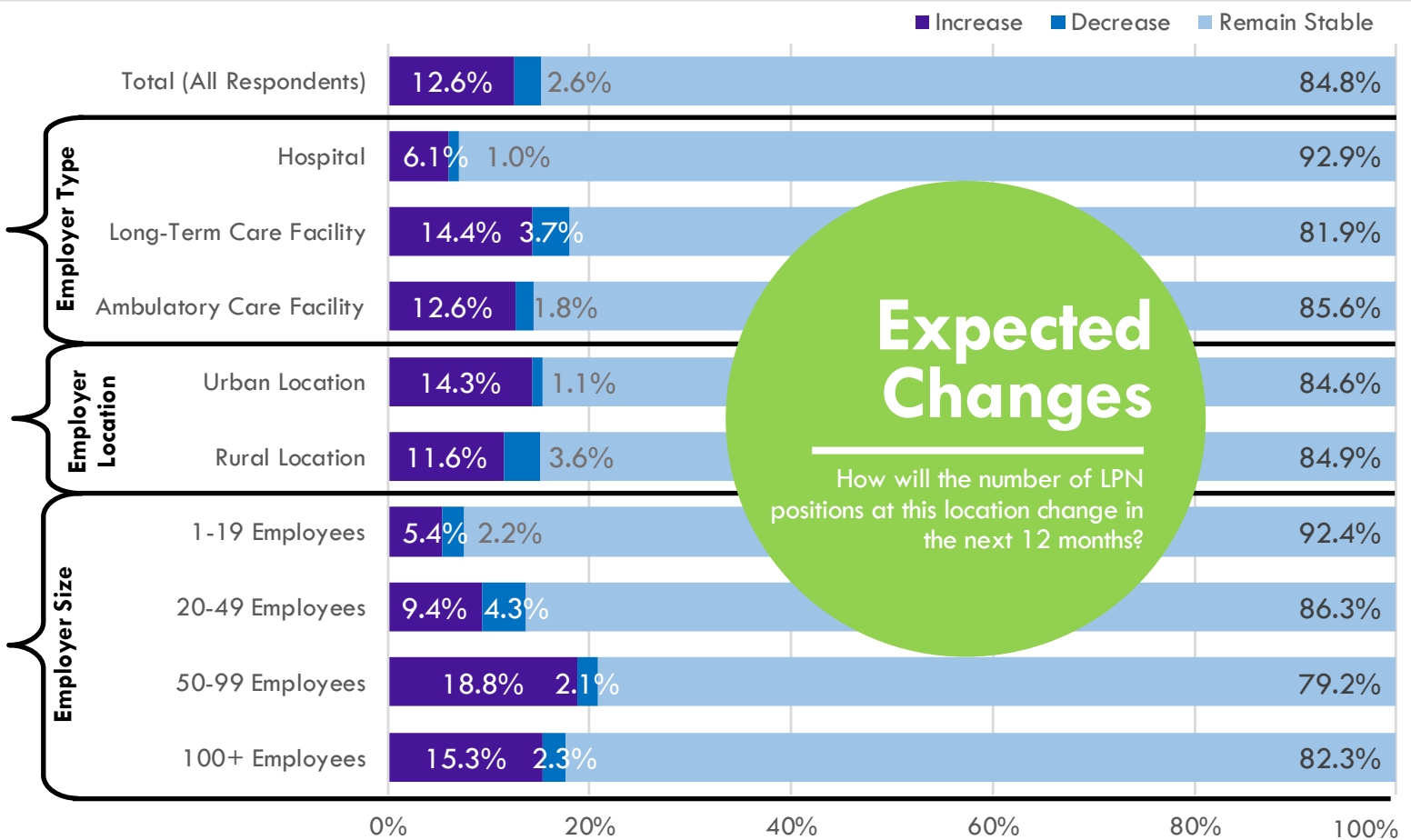
Employer Location

Respondents located in a rural ZIP Code represent the largest portion (62.4%) of respondents who reported current LPN openings. However, rural locations represent only a slight majority in total openings reported (460 of 902) over urban locations; representing 51.0 percent of all LPN openings reported.



Employer Size

Mid-to-large sized employers (50-99 employees and 100+ employees) represent the largest portion (76.5%) of respondents who reported current LPN openings. The greatest number of total openings reported (766 of 902) were also among mid-to-large sized employers; representing about 84.9 percent of all LPN openings reported.



Future of Available LPN Positions

Respondents were asked how the number of LPN positions are expected to change at their location in the next 12 months. A total of 730 respondents answered this question. The demographic breakout of these respondents are as follows:

- 48.5% long-term care facilities; 37.9% ambulatory care facilities; and 13.6% hospitals
- 61.6% located in a rural ZIP Code and 38.4% located in an urban ZIP Code
- 29.5% have 100+ employees; 26.3% have 50-99 employees; 25.2% have 1-19 employees; and 19.0% have 20-49 employees

“ LPN’s are hard to find and we would prefer them over a CMA. I am not sure they are paid enough in comparison to the CMA. ”

The chart above displays, within each demographic breakout, the percentage of respondents who expect an increase, decrease, or no change in LPN positions over the next 12 months.

The majority of respondents within each breakout do not foresee any change in LPN employment at their location.



Employer Type

14.4% of long-term care facility respondents expect an increase in LPN positions over the next 12 months. Among this group, slightly over 88 percent foresee an increase of 1-4 LPN positions.



Employer Location

14.3% of respondents located in an urban ZIP Code expect an increase in LPN positions over the next 12 months. Among this group, 72.5 percent expect an increase of 1-4 LPN positions.



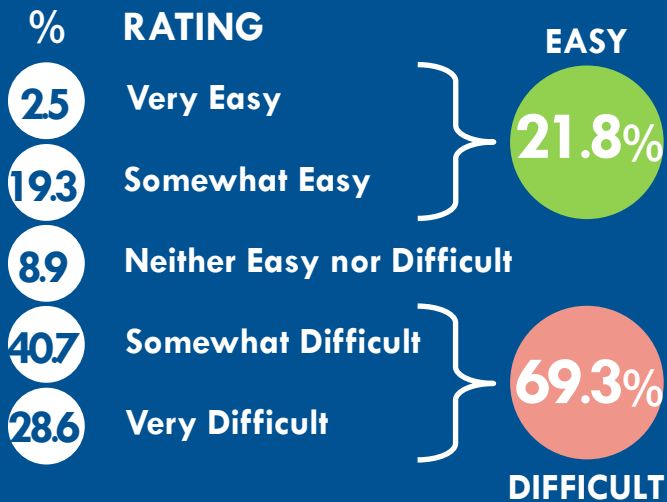
Employer Size

18.8% of respondents with a total of 50-99 employees expect an increase in LPN positions over the next 12 months. Among this group, 91.7 percent foresee an increase of 1-4 positions.

Ease of Recruiting & Hiring LPNs

Respondents were asked to rate their experience with recruiting and hiring LPNs at their location. Respondents rated their experience from very easy to very difficult.

There were a total of 528 respondents that provided a rating. The results are broken out below.



Hired LPNs

Respondents were asked how many LPNs were hired at their location in the last 12 months. Additionally, they were asked if their location hired any new LPN graduates during that year and if so how many. Overall results are given below.

- 617 full-time LPNs were hired
- 294 part-time LPNs were hired
- 42 contract/travel LPNs were hired
- 162 respondents (23.8%) indicated that they had hired new LPN graduates at their location within the last year.
 - Reporting 276 new LPN graduates hired

“ We have not had an applicant for our LPN positions for the past few years and have re-formatted the position due to this. Other assisted living communities in the area have experienced the same problem.

”

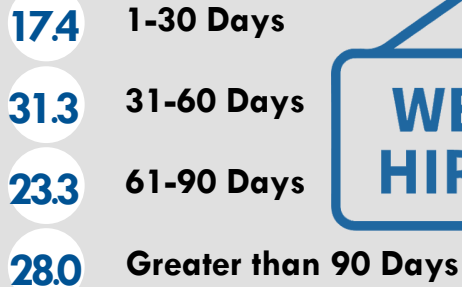


Timeline to Fill Openings

Respondents were asked to indicate the average number of days it takes their location to fill open positions for LPNs.

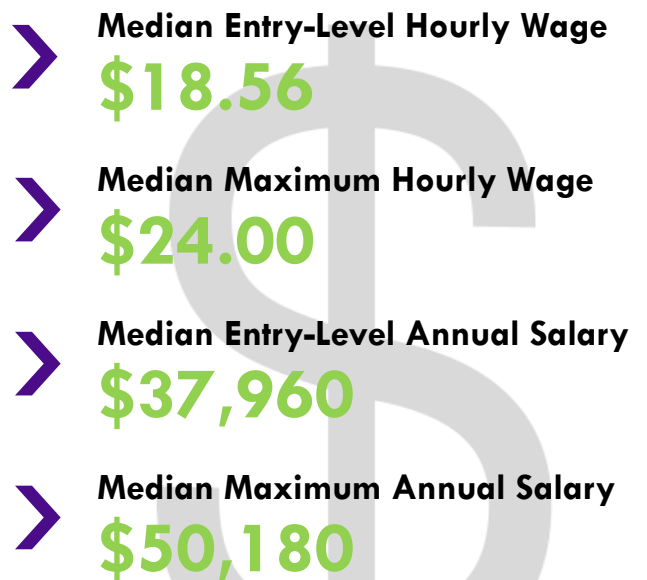
A total of 511 respondents answered this question. The results are provided below.

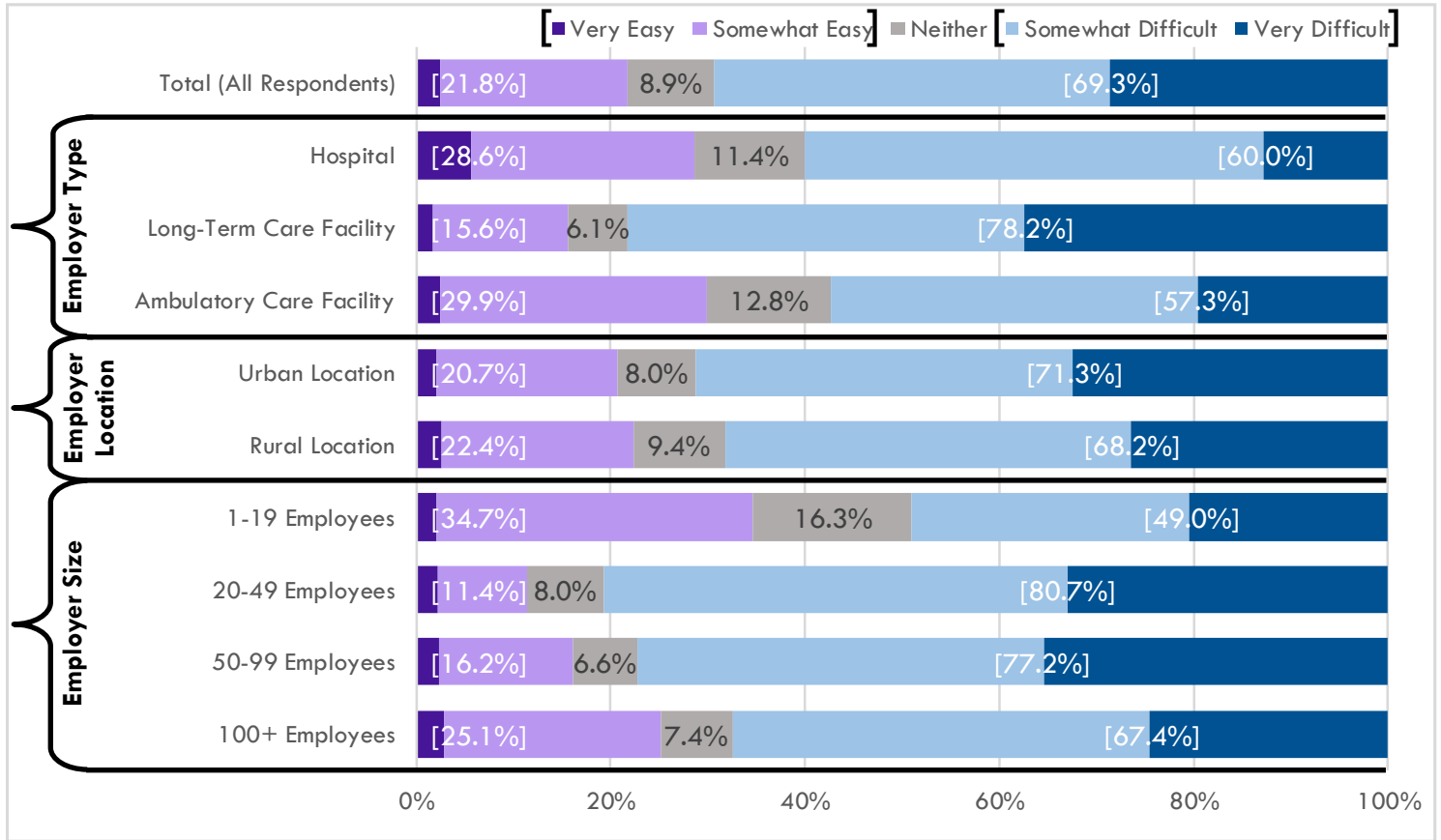
% AVERAGE TIMEFRAME



The majority of respondents (31.3%) indicated it took them approximately 31-60 days to fill an LPN opening. However, the next greatest percentage of respondents (28.0%) reported that it averaged greater than 90 days to fill an opening for a licensed practical nurse.

Respondents were asked to provide wage information regarding their LPN employees. Participating survey takers provided the entry-level hourly wage their location offers as well as their maximum hourly wage for LPNs. Additionally, respondents provided entry-level annual salaries and maximum annual salaries offered at their location for LPNs.





Ease of Recruitment & Hiring of LPNs by Employer Demographics

Survey respondents rated their experience with recruiting and hiring LPNs at their location. The differences in ease of recruitment and hiring by employer demographics are illustrated in the chart above.



Employer Type

Among employer types, respondents in long-term care have the hardest time recruiting and hiring LPNs; with 78.2 percent rating the experience as “somewhat or very difficult.”



Employer Location

Surprisingly, respondents located in an urban ZIP Code appear to have a slightly more difficult time hiring and recruiting LPNs; with 71.3 percent rating their experience as “somewhat or very difficult.” This is 3.1 percentage points greater than their rural counterparts within the same category.

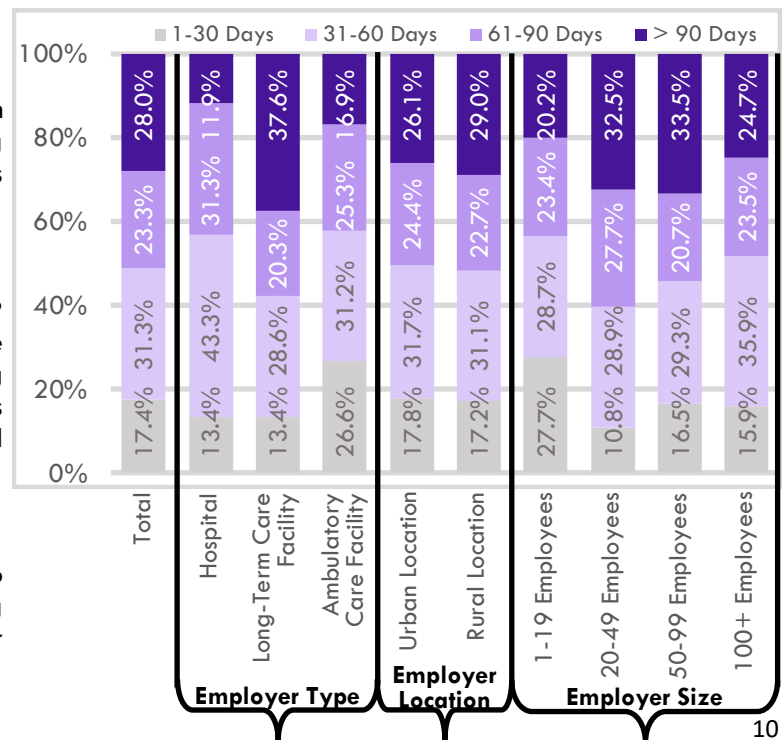


Employer Size

Employers with 20-49 total employees appear to struggle the most among all employer sizes in hiring and recruiting LPNs; with 80.7 percent rating their experience as “somewhat or very difficult.”

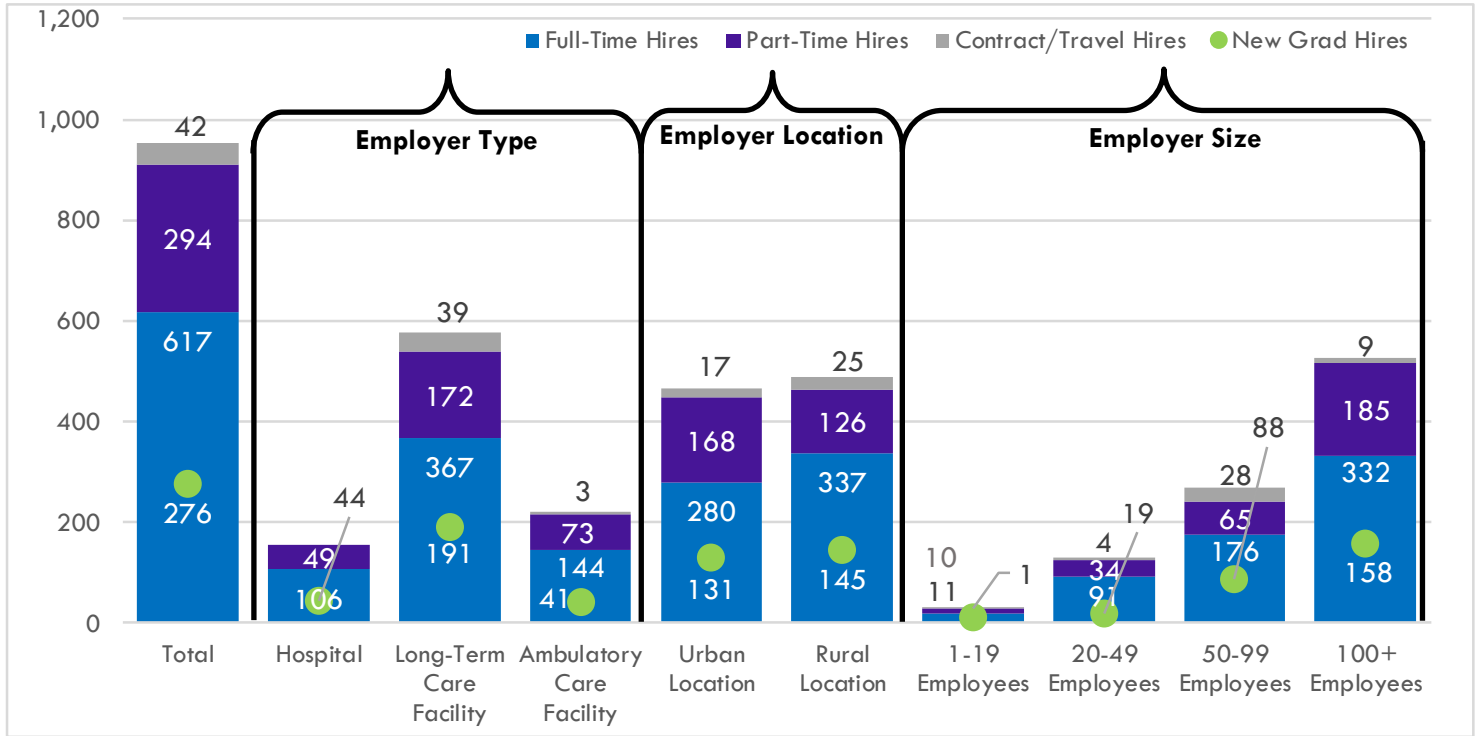
Timeline to Fill LPN Openings

The chart below provides information regarding the amount of time it takes a location to fill an LPN opening, broken out by employer demographics. Long-term care facilities appear to have the hardest time filling LPN positions, with 57.9 percent reporting it takes, on average, over 60 days.



Hired LPNs by Employer Demographics

Respondents were asked how many LPNs were hired at their location in the last 12 months. Additionally, they were asked if their location hired any new LPN graduates during that year and if so how many. Results, by employer demographics, can be seen in the chart below. The number of new graduate hires are incorporated into the full-time/part-time/contract totals; however, the overall total number of new grads is indicated separately by the green dot.



Where are LPNs hired the most?

As a percentage of total hires, long-term care facilities, represent 60.7 percent of all LPN hires which is the greatest among all employer types. In regards to employer location, employers located in rural ZIP Codes represent 51.2 percent of total LPN hires, slightly outpacing urban employers. Lastly, employers with 100+ employees hire the greatest amount of LPNs, representing 55.2 percent of all LPN hires, when hires are examined by employer size.

Where do new LPN graduates go?

Long-term care facilities, by far, hire more new LPN graduates than any other employer type. A total of 276 new LPN graduates were hired in the last year, based upon survey data, and 69.2 percent were hired at long-term care facilities.

Wages of LPNs by Employer Demographics

Participating survey takers provided the entry-level hourly wage/annual salary their location offers as well as the maximum hourly wage/annual salary provided to experienced LPNs. Median wage information by employer demographics are given in the table to the right.

In general, long-term care facilities offer the highest wages. There is very little difference in wages between urban and rural locations.

Employer Characteristics	Median Wages			
	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Maximum Hourly Wage	Entry-Level Annual Salary	Maximum Annual Salary
Total (All Respondents)	\$ 18.56	\$ 24.00	\$ 37,960.00	\$ 50,180.00
Hospital	\$ 16.30	\$ 24.26	\$ 32,930.56	\$ 49,395.84
Long-Term Care Facility	\$ 20.00	\$ 23.90	\$ 41,600.00	\$ 52,000.00
Ambulatory Care Facility	\$ 17.04	\$ 24.00	\$ 35,445.00	\$ 47,840.00
Urban Location	\$ 18.56	\$ 24.39	\$ 37,824.50	\$ 50,481.60
Rural Location	\$ 18.56	\$ 23.76	\$ 37,960.00	\$ 49,733.00
1-19 Employees	\$ 17.00	\$ 23.87	\$ 35,360.00	\$ 43,499.78
20-49 Employees	\$ 19.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 37,440.00	\$ 50,481.60
50-99 Employees	\$ 20.00	\$ 23.50	\$ 40,560.00	\$ 50,690.00
100+ Employees	\$ 18.00	\$ 24.50	\$ 37,652.65	\$ 51,012.00

Blue highlighting indicates the areas where the highest wages are offered per level. Purple highlighting indicates where the lowest wages are offered per level.

Section Three

Registered Nurses

Overview

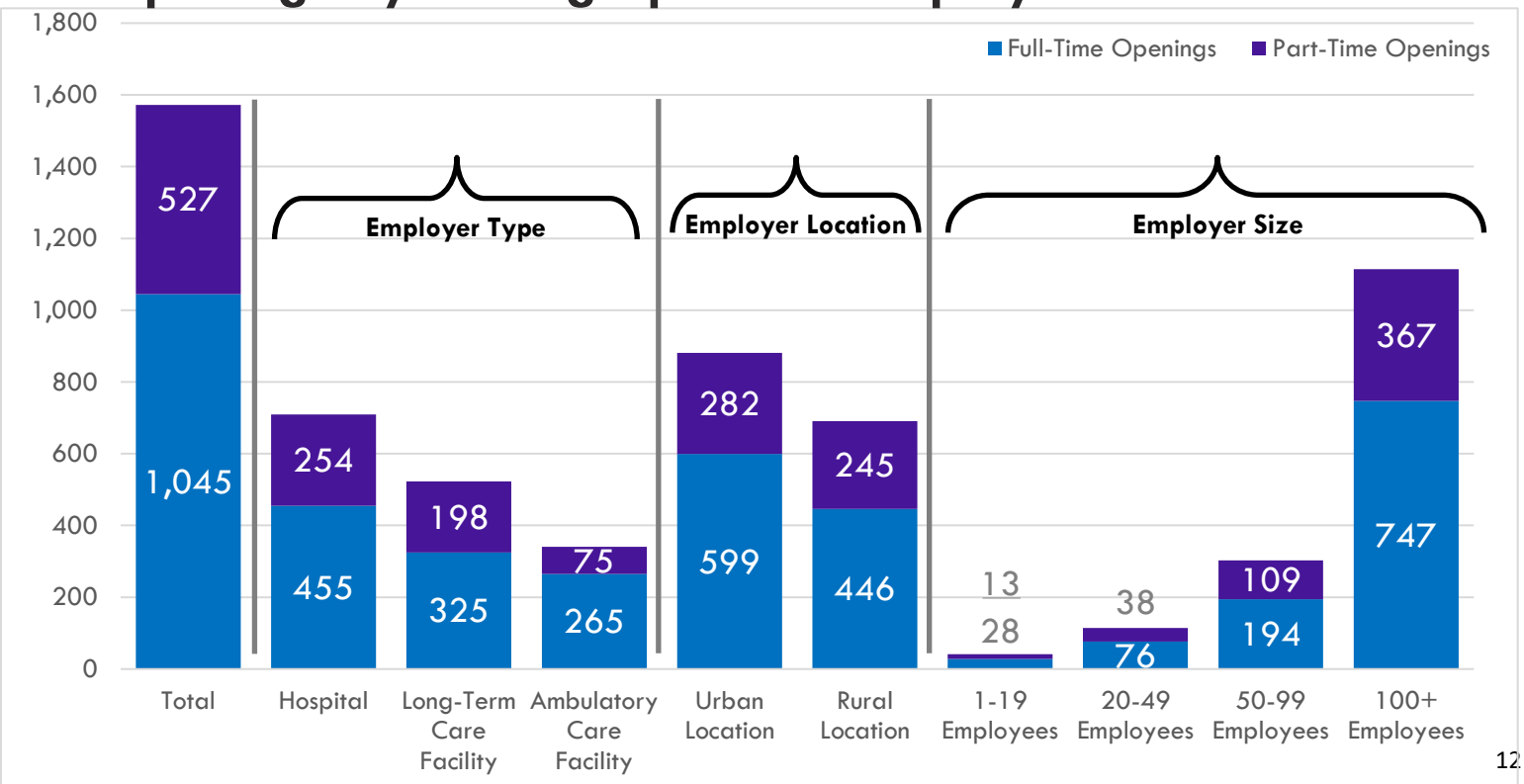
Survey participants were asked about openings, expected changes in employment, and recruitment issues for several different nursing titles. This section reviews the survey results in those areas for the occupation of registered nurse (RN). Each area is examined by employer type, employer location, and employer size.

RN Openings

Survey participants were asked: Does this location have current openings for RNs? To this question, 370 respondents (47.7%) answered “yes.” Of this group, nearly three-fifths (59.2%) of respondents represent long-term care facilities. Additionally, among those that answered “yes” a majority were located in a rural area (63.2%) versus an urban area (36.8%). Finally, in regards to the demographics of these respondents, the majority were mid-to-large size employers with 32.7 percent of respondents answering “yes” having 50-99 employees and 43.8 percent having 100+ employees.

These respondents reported a total of 1,572 current RN openings. Of these 66.5 percent are full-time positions and 33.5 percent were part-time. Openings by employer type, employer location, and employer size are detailed in the chart below. Respondents were also asked to indicate if these openings were for direct care or indirect care nurses. The majority (88.9%) reported these openings were for direct care RNs, 9.2 percent were for indirect care RNs, and 2.0 percent reported they did not know the care classification of the openings. Lastly, nearly two percent of all reported openings (31) were for contract/travel/agency RNs.

RN Openings by Demographics of Employer



Employer Type

Long-term care facilities represent the largest portion (59.2%) of respondents who reported current RN openings. However, the greatest number of total openings reported (709 of 1,572) were at hospitals; representing 45.1 percent of all RN openings reported.



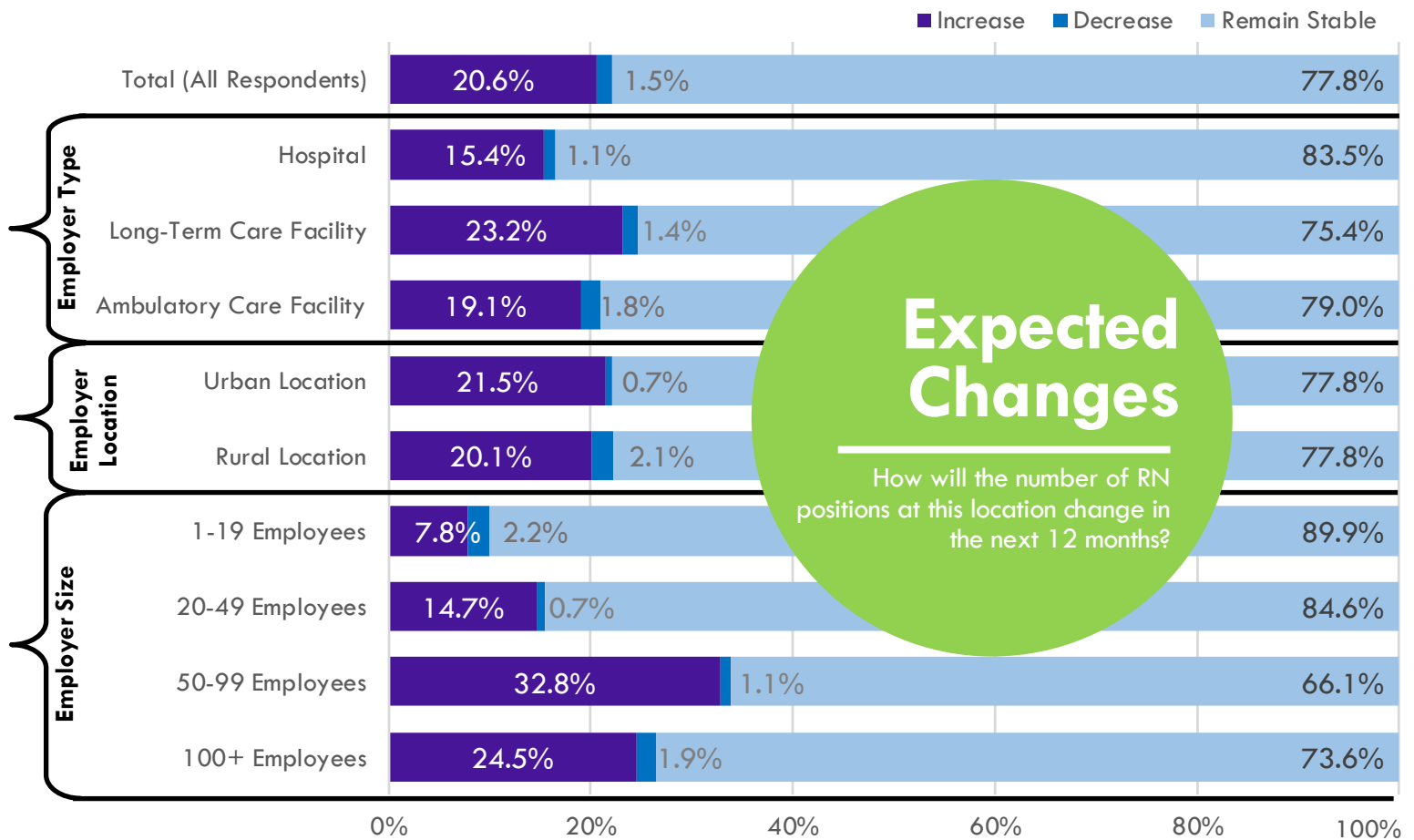
Employer Location

Respondents located in a rural ZIP Code represent the largest portion (63.2%) of respondents who reported current RN openings. However, urban locations represent a majority of total openings reported (881 of 1,572); representing 56.0 percent of all RN openings reported.



Employer Size

Mid-to-large sized employers (50-99 employees and 100+ employees) represent the largest portion (76.5%) of respondents who reported current RN openings. The greatest number of total openings reported (1,417 of 1,572) were also among mid-to-large sized employers; representing about 90 percent of all RN openings reported.



Expected Changes
How will the number of RN positions at this location change in the next 12 months?

Future of Available RN Positions

Respondents were asked how the number of RN positions are expected to change at their location in the next 12 months. A total of 712 respondents answered this question. The demographic breakout of these respondents are as follows:

- 49.0% long-term care facilities; 38.2% ambulatory care facilities; and 12.8% hospitals
- 61.4% located in a rural ZIP Code and 38.6% located in an urban ZIP Code
- 29.2% have 100+ employees; 26.5% have 50-99 employees; 25.1% have 1-19 employees; and 19.1% have 20-49 employees

The chart above displays, within each demographic breakout, the percentage of respondents who expect an increase, decrease, or no change in RN positions over the next 12 months.

The majority of respondents within each breakout do not foresee any change in RN employment at their location. However, in each category a greater percentage expect an increase in RN positions than what is reported for the same groups regarding LPN positions. In fact, five out of nine demographic categories shown above depict that 20 percent or more expect an increase in RN positions in the next 12 months.

Employer Type

23.2% of long-term care facility respondents expect an increase in RN positions over the next 12 months. Among this group, slightly less than 85 percent foresee an increase of 1-4 RN positions.

Employer Location

21.5% of respondents located in an urban ZIP Code expect an increase in RN positions over the next 12 months. Among this group, 71.4 percent expect an increase of 1-4 RN positions.

Employer Size

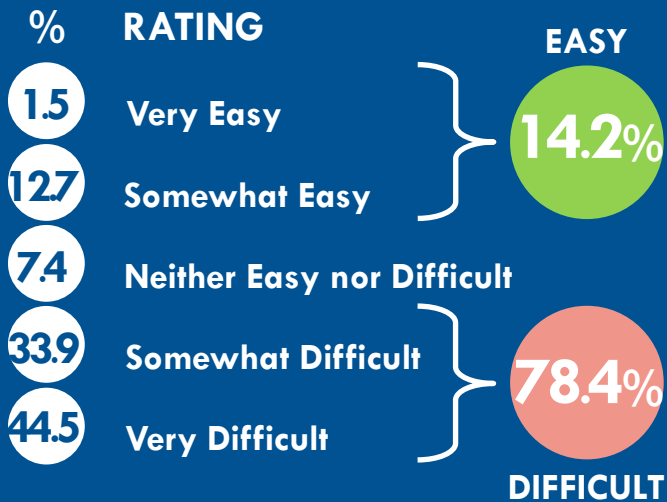
32.8% of respondents with a total of 50-99 employees expect an increase in RN positions over the next 12 months. Among this group, 85.5 percent foresee an increase of 1-4 positions.

“ Due to the demand for nurses throughout the state it is very difficult for nursing facilities to comply with the eight consecutive hours of RN coverage. RNs are very scarce in rural areas. ”

Ease of Recruiting & Hiring RNs

Respondents were asked to rate their experience with recruiting and hiring RNs at their location. Respondents rated their experience from very easy to very difficult.

There were a total of 605 respondents that provided a rating. The results are broken out below.



Timeline to Fill Openings

Respondents were asked to indicate the average number of days it takes their location to fill open positions for RNs.

A total of 586 respondents answered this question. The results are provided below.



The majority of respondents (34.6%) indicated it took them greater than 90 days to fill an RN opening. The next greatest percentage of respondents (26.0%) reported that it averaged 61-90 days to fill an opening for a registered nurse.

Hired RNs

Respondents were asked how many RNs were hired at their location in the last 12 months. Additionally, they were asked if their location hired any new RN graduates during that year and if so how many. Overall results are given below.

- 1,627 full-time RNs were hired
- 529 part-time RNs were hired
- 142 contract/travel RNs were hired
- 201 respondents (29.1%) indicated that they had hired new RN graduates at their location within the last year.
 - Reporting 448 new RN graduates hired

Respondents were asked to provide wage information regarding their RN employees. Participating survey takers provided the entry-level hourly wage their location offers as well as their maximum hourly wage for RNs. Additionally, respondents provided entry-level annual salaries and maximum annual salaries offered at their location for RNs.



ADN vs BSN prepared Registered Nurses

Is a hiring preference given to BSN RNs over ADN RNs?

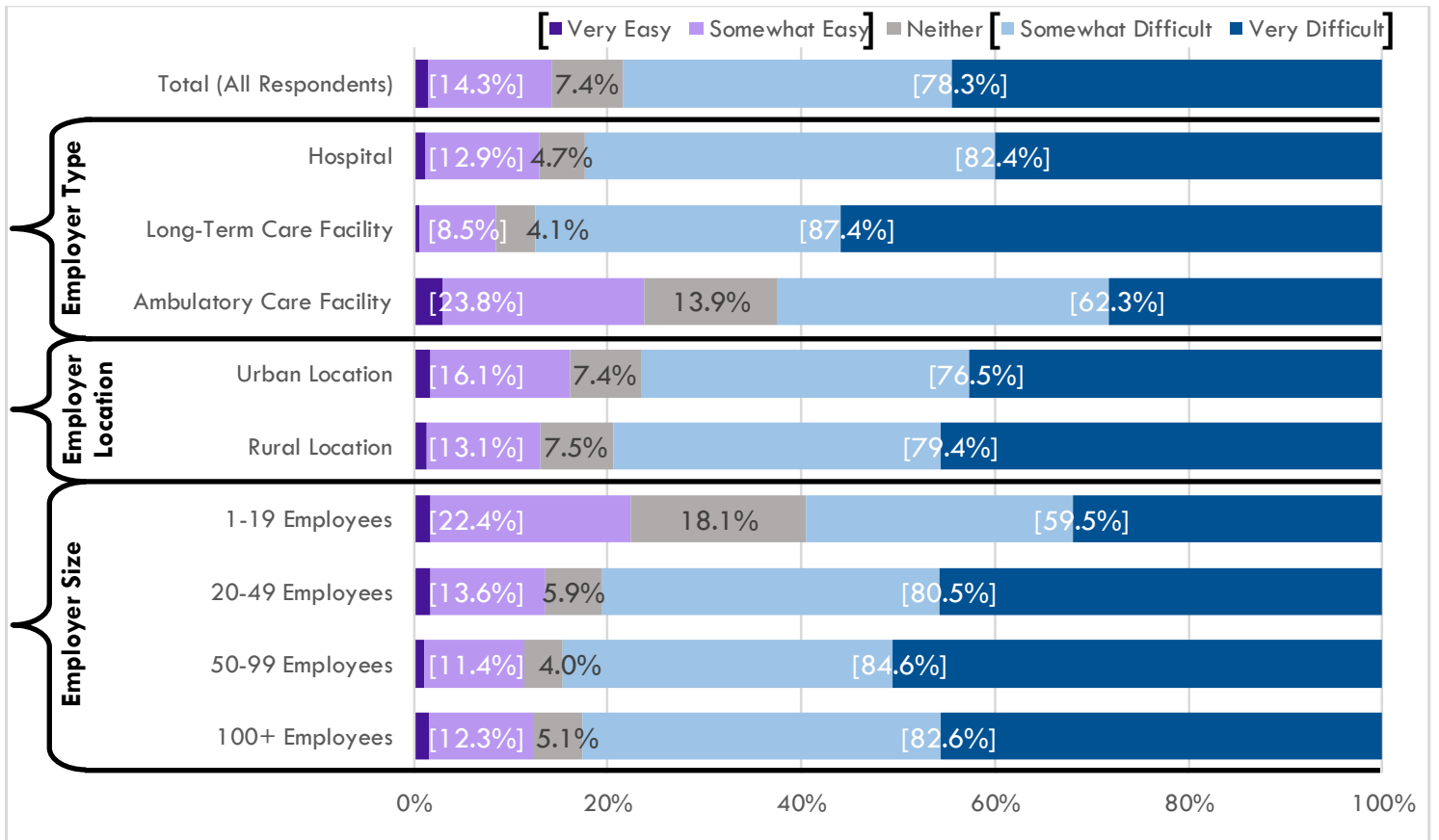
- **89.2% of respondents said, "NO."**

Are BSN RNs generally better prepared and/or give better care than ADN RNs? Respondents said:

- **49.7%** - "No, or they are the same."
- **38.4%** - "I don't know."
- **10.3%** - "Yes"
- **1.0%** - "Other"
- **0.6%** - "Experience makes more of a difference than degrees do."

IS A PAY DIFFERENTIAL GIVEN TO BSN REGISTERED NURSES OVER ADN RNs?

- **88.1% of respondents said, "NO."**



Ease of Recruitment & Hiring of RNs by Employer Demographics

Survey respondents rated their experience with recruiting and hiring RNs at their location. The differences in ease of recruitment and hiring by employer demographics are illustrated in the chart above.



Employer Type

Among employer types, respondents in long-term care have the hardest time recruiting and hiring RNs; with 87.4 percent rating the experience as “somewhat or very difficult.”



Employer Location

Respondents located in a rural ZIP Code appear to have a slightly more difficult time hiring and recruiting RNs; with 79.4 percent rating their experience as “somewhat or very difficult.” This is 2.9 percentage points greater than their urban counterparts within the same category.

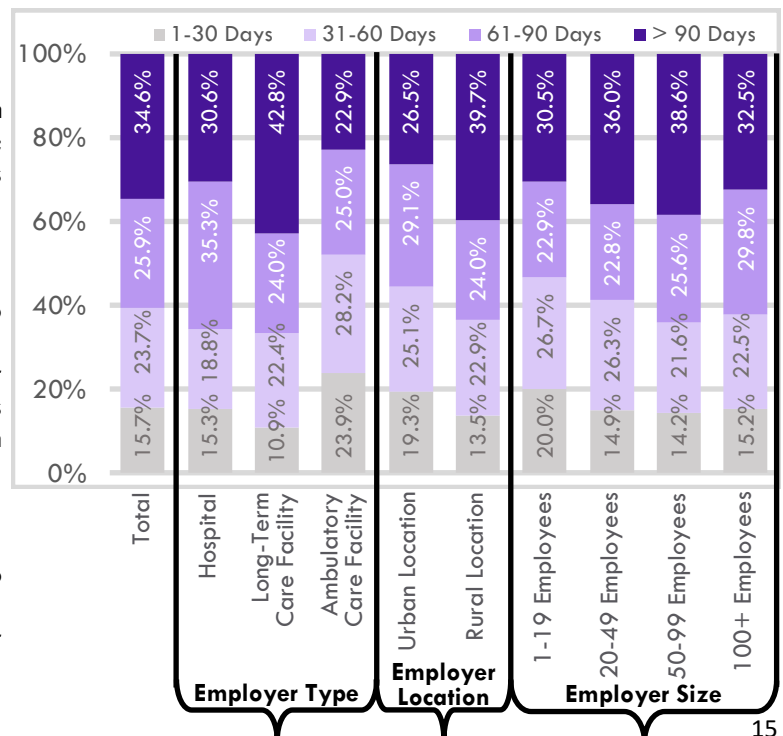


Employer Size

Employers with 50-99 total employees appear to struggle the most among all employer sizes in hiring and recruiting RNs; with 84.6 percent rating their experience as “somewhat or very difficult.”

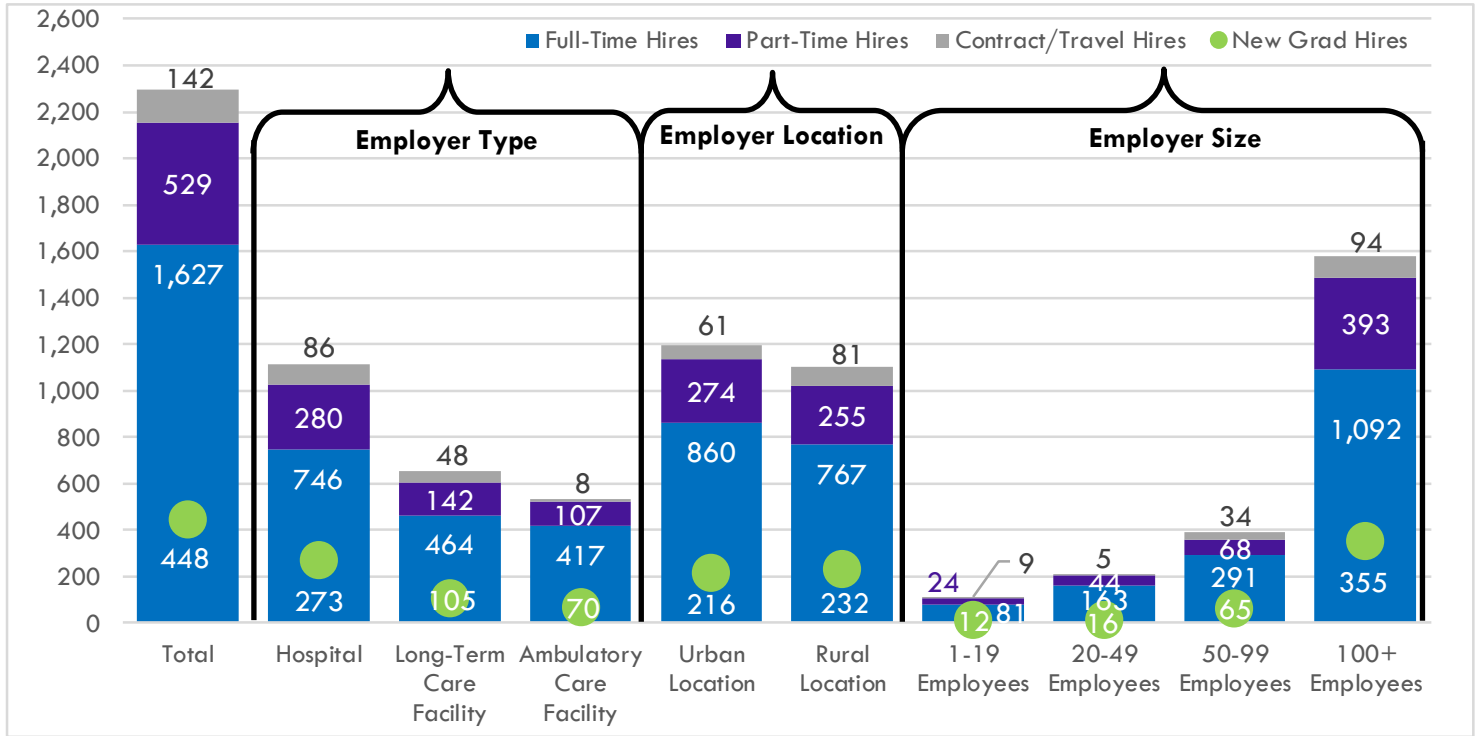
Timeline to Fill RN Openings

The chart below provides information regarding the amount of time it takes a location to fill an RN opening, broken out by employer demographics. Long-term care facilities appear to have the hardest time filling RN positions, with 66.8 percent reporting it takes, on average, over 60 days.



Hired RNs by Employer Demographics

Respondents were asked how many RNs were hired at their location in the last 12 months. Additionally, they were asked if their location hired any new RN graduates during that year and if so how many. Results, by employer demographics, can be seen in the chart below. The number of new graduate hires are incorporated into the full-time/part-time/contract totals; however, the overall total number of new grads is indicated separately by the green dot.



Where are RNs hired the most?

As a percentage of total hires, hospitals, represent 48.4 percent of all RN hires which is the greatest among all employer types. In regards to employer location, employers located in urban ZIP Codes represent 52.0 percent of total RN hires, slightly outpacing rural employers. Lastly, employers with 100+ employees hire the greatest amount of RNs, representing 68.7 percent of all RN hires, when hires are examined by employer size.

Where do new RN graduates go?

Hospitals, by far, hire more new RN graduates than any other employer type. A total of 448 new RN graduates were hired in the last year, based upon survey data, and 60.9 percent were hired at hospitals. Additionally the majority of new graduates went to rural locations (51.8%) and to employers with over 100 total employees (79.2%).

Wages of RNs by Employer Demographics

Participating survey takers provided the entry-level hourly wage/annual salary their location offers as well as the maximum hourly wage/annual salary provided to experienced RNs. Median wage information by employer demographics are given in the table to the right.

Long-term care facilities offer the highest entry-level wages. However, hospitals offer the highest maximum wages available to experienced RNs. There is little difference in wages between urban and rural locations, except at the maximum annual salary level.

Employer Characteristics	Median Wages			
	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Maximum Hourly Wage	Entry-Level Annual Salary	Maximum Annual Salary
Total (All Respondents)	\$ 24.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 50,018.00	\$ 65,000.00
Hospital	\$ 23.91	\$ 35.56	\$ 49,608.00	\$ 73,195.00
Long-Term Care Facility	\$ 24.49	\$ 29.00	\$ 52,000.00	\$ 64,313.50
Ambulatory Care Facility	\$ 22.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 48,382.50	\$ 65,000.00
Urban Location	\$ 24.00	\$ 31.23	\$ 50,018.00	\$ 68,640.00
Rural Location	\$ 23.85	\$ 30.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 62,400.00
1-19 Employees	\$ 22.00	\$ 29.69	\$ 47,840.00	\$ 60,000.00
20-49 Employees	\$ 23.00	\$ 29.00	\$ 52,000.00	\$ 65,000.00
50-99 Employees	\$ 24.00	\$ 29.01	\$ 50,960.00	\$ 63,273.50
100+ Employees	\$ 24.00	\$ 34.01	\$ 51,000.00	\$ 71,638.00

Blue highlighting indicates the areas where the highest wages are offered per level. Purple highlighting indicates where the lowest wages are offered per level.

Section Four

Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners

Overview

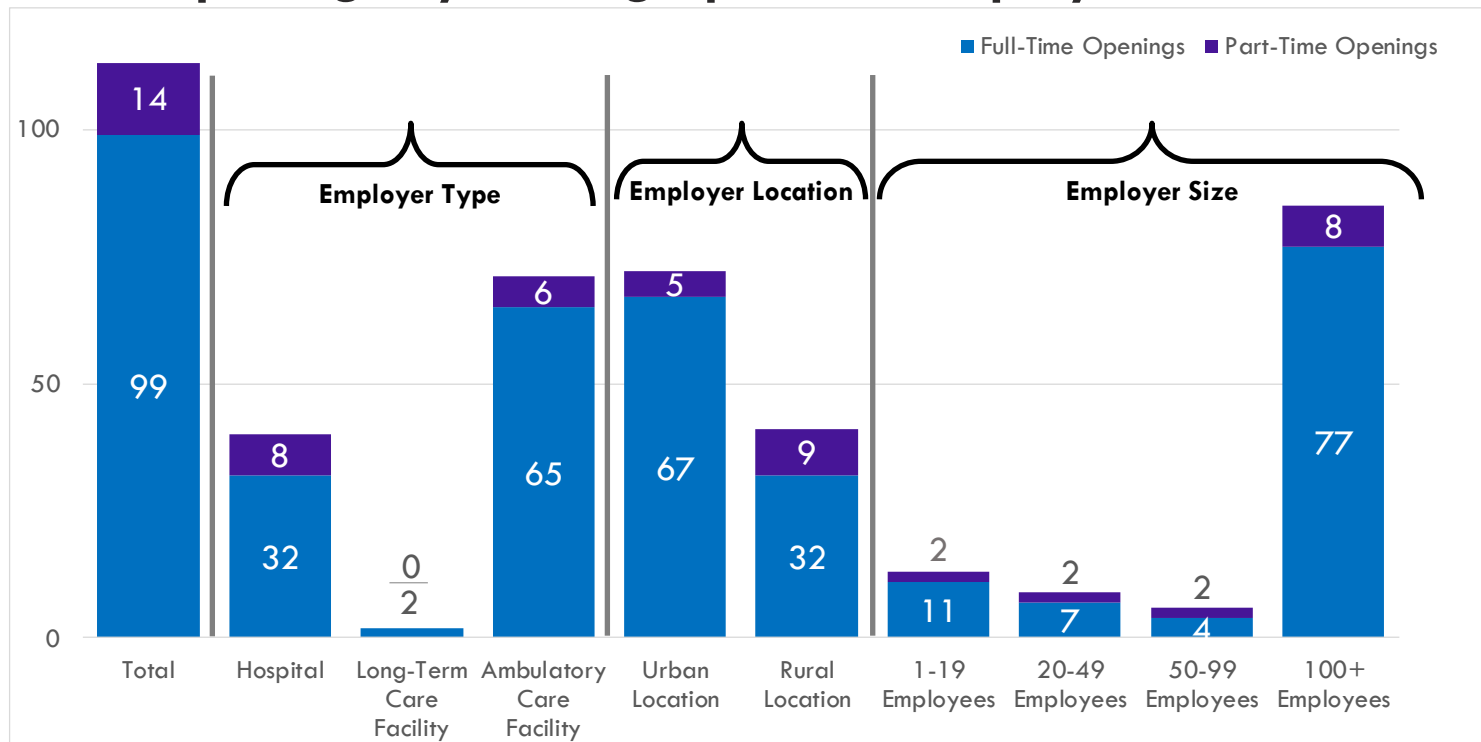
Survey participants were asked about openings, expected changes in employment, and recruitment issues for several different nursing titles. This section reviews the survey results in those areas for advanced registered nurse practitioners (ARNP). Each area is examined by employer type, employer location, and employer size. Analysis is given for each of the following roles: nurse practitioner (NP), certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA), clinical nurse specialist (CNS), and certified nurse midwife (CNM). Many subject areas, however, will require that data for all four of these titles be aggregated in order to conduct analysis.

ARNP Openings

Survey participants were asked: ‘Does this location have current openings?’ for the four advanced nursing roles defined above. To this question, 46 respondents (6.0%) answered “yes.” Among these, 39 reported openings for NPs, 11 had openings for CRNAs, and 4 had CNS openings. No survey respondents reported openings for CNMs.

These respondents reported a total of 113 current ARNP openings. Nurse practitioners represent 94 of these openings. A total of 16 openings were reported for CRNAs and 3 CNS openings are represented in the chart below. Among all reported openings 87.6 percent were full-time positions and 12.4 percent were part-time. Lastly, less than two percent (1.8%) of all reported openings (2) were for contract/travel/agency advanced nurses, both were for NPs. Openings by employer type, employer location, and employer size are detailed in the following chart.

ARNP Openings by Demographics of Employer



Employer Type

Ambulatory care facilities represent the largest portion (56.5%) of respondents who reported current ARNP openings. Likewise, the greatest number of total openings reported (71 of 113) were at ambulatory care facilities; representing 62.8 percent of all openings reported.



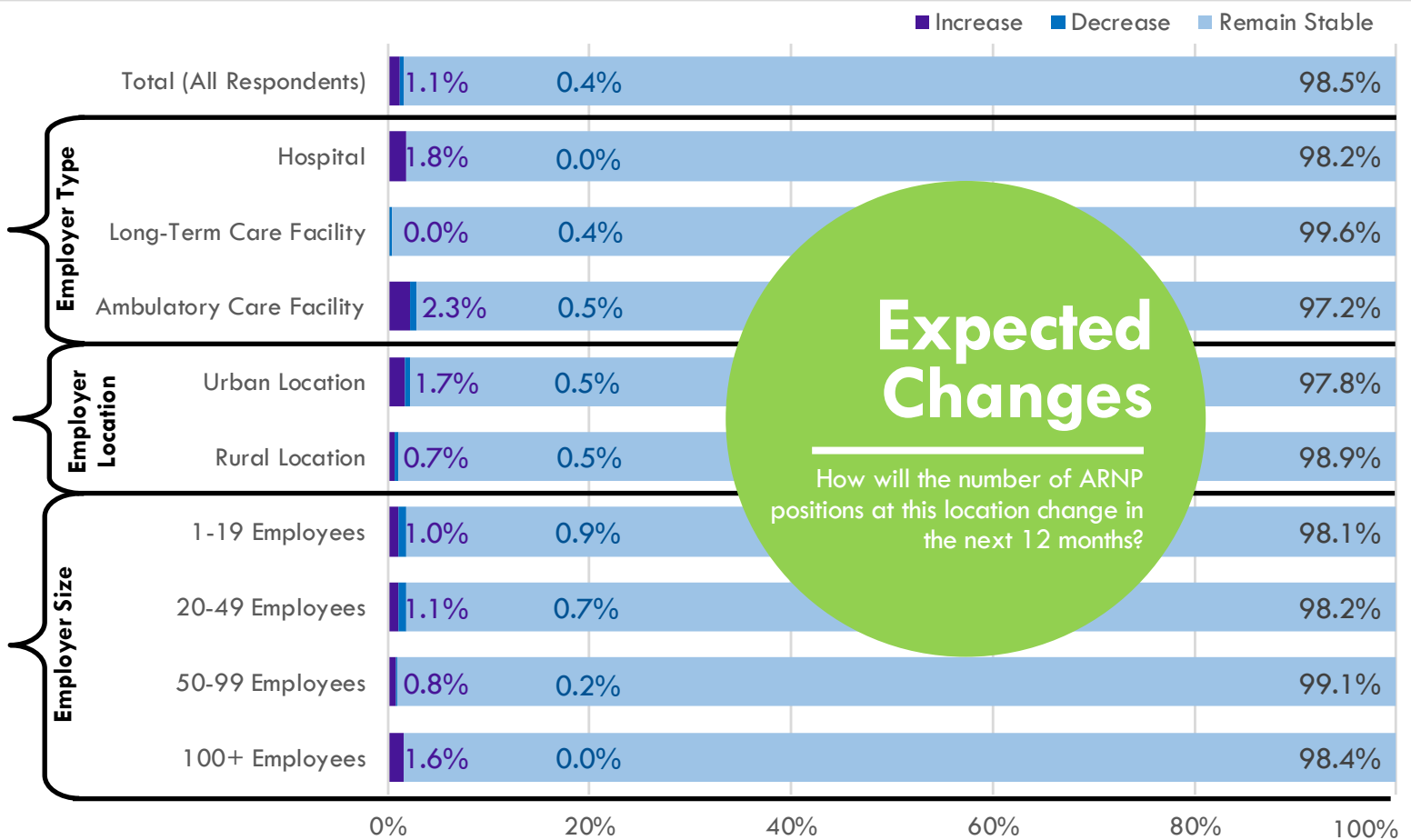
Employer Location

Respondents located in a rural ZIP Code represent the largest portion (56.5%) of respondents who reported current openings. However, rural locations represent only 36.3 percent of total openings reported (41 of 113).



Employer Size

Large employers (100+ employees) represent the largest portion (58.7%) of respondents who reported current ARNP openings. The greatest number of total openings reported (85 of 113) were also large employers; representing about 75.2 percent of all ARNP openings reported.



Future of Available ARNP Positions

Respondents were asked how the number of NP, CRNA, CNS, and CNM positions are expected to change at their location in the next 12 months. Over 600 respondents answered these questions. The demographic breakout of these respondents are as follows:

- 47.5% long-term care facilities; 39.2% ambulatory care facilities; and 13.3% hospitals
- 61.8% located in a rural ZIP Code and 38.2% located in an urban ZIP Code
- 27.9% have 100+ employees; 27.8% have 1-19 employees; 25.9% have 50-99 employees; and 18.3% have 20-49 employees

“ We know that we are asking more and more of our nurses, and are trying to do what we can to mitigate this to avoid burnout. Many of our best nurses are getting advanced degrees, to the point that we are saturated with NPs. There are 4 in programs right now that want the opportunity to practice for us, but we won't be able to accommodate them all.

”

The chart above displays, within each demographic breakout, the percentage of respondents who expect an increase, decrease, or no change in ARNP positions at their location over the next 12 months.

The majority of respondents within each breakout do not foresee any change in ARNP employment at their location.



Employer Type

2.3% of ambulatory care facility respondents expect an increase in ARNP positions over the next 12 months. Among this group, slightly over 94 percent foresee an increase of 1-4 NP positions.



Employer Location

1.7% of respondents located in an urban ZIP Code expect an increase in ARNP positions over the next 12 months. Among this group, 80.0 percent expect an increase of 1-4 NP positions.



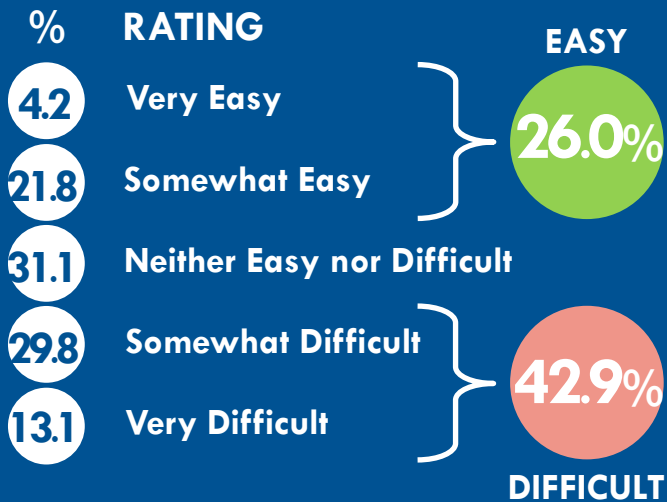
Employer Size

1.6% of respondents with a total of 100+ employees expect an increase in ARNP positions over the next 12 months. Among this group, 66.7 percent foresee an increase of 1-4 NP positions.

Ease of Recruiting & Hiring ARNPs

Respondents were asked to rate their experience with recruiting and hiring ARNPs at their location. Respondents rated their experience from very easy to very difficult.

There were a total of 312 respondents that provided a rating. The results are broken out below.



Hired ARNPs

Respondents were asked how many NPs, CRNAs, CNS, and CNMs were hired at their location in the last 12 months. Overall results are given below.

- 196 full-time NPs, 15 full-time CRNAs, 2 full-time CNS, and 3 full-time CNMs were hired
- 45 part-time NPs, 4 part-time CRNAs, 0 part-time CNS, and 3 part-time CNMs were hired
- 3 contract/travel NPs, 16 contract/travel CRNAs, 1 contract/travel CNS, and 7 contract/travel CNMs were hired

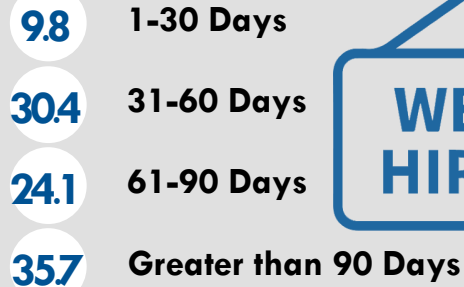
“Nursing programs are graduating fewer nurses. Many nurses are going back to school for their Advanced Nurse Practice degrees and the market is becoming saturated. They do not consider post graduate degrees that lead to teaching, leadership positions, etc. This is unfortunate because we desperately need both.”

Timeline to Fill Openings

Respondents were asked to indicate the average number of days it takes their location to fill open positions for ARNPs.

A total of 224 respondents answered this question. The results are provided below.

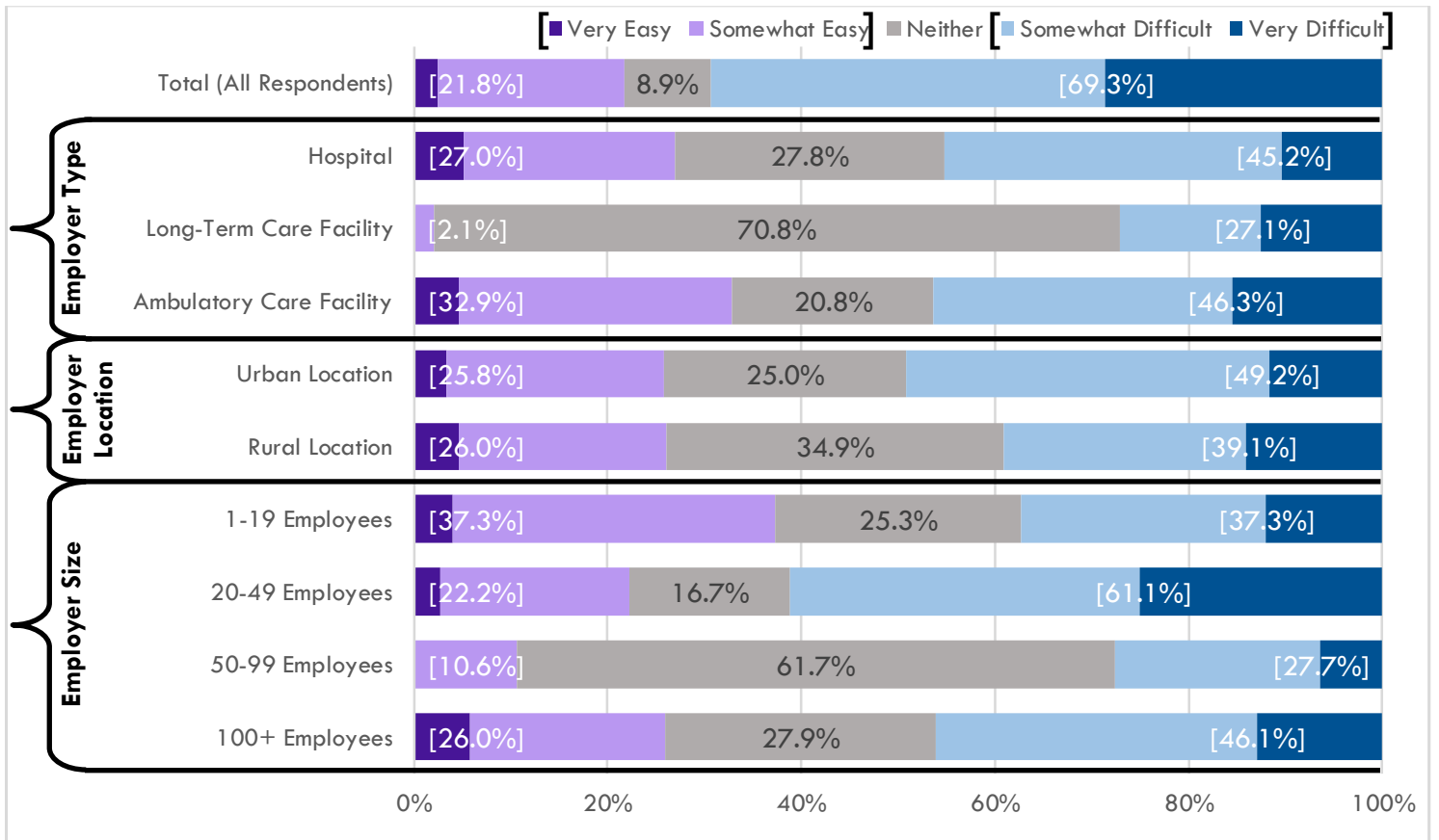
% AVERAGE TIMEFRAME



The majority of respondents (35.7%) indicated it took them more than 90 days to fill an ARNP opening. The next greatest percentage of respondents (30.4%) reported that it averaged 31-60 days to fill an opening.

Respondents were asked to provide wage information regarding their NP, CRNA, CNS, and CNM employees. Participating survey takers provided the entry-level hourly wage their location offers as well as their maximum hourly wage for these occupations. Additionally, respondents provided entry-level annual salaries and maximum annual salaries offered. *Note: Too few respondents provided wage information for Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS); therefore, wage data is not available for this occupation.*

	Nurse Practitioner	Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist	Certified Nurse Midwife
Median Entry-Level Hourly Wage	\$42.26	\$79.75	\$44.47
Median Maximum Hourly Wage	\$62.00	\$115.63	\$65.69
Median Entry-Level Annual Salary	\$91,760	\$170,909	\$90,502
Median Maximum Annual Salary	\$126,880	\$244,800	\$126,056



Ease of Recruitment & Hiring by Employer Demographics

Survey respondents rated their experience with recruiting and hiring ARNPs at their location. The differences in ease of recruitment and hiring by employer demographics are illustrated in the chart above.



Employer Type

Among employer types, respondents in ambulatory care have the hardest time recruiting and hiring NPs, CRNAs, CNS, and CNMs; with 46.3 percent rating the experience as “somewhat or very difficult.”



Employer Location

Surprisingly, respondents located in an urban ZIP Code appear to have a more difficult time hiring and recruiting; with 49.2 percent rating their experience as “somewhat or very difficult.”

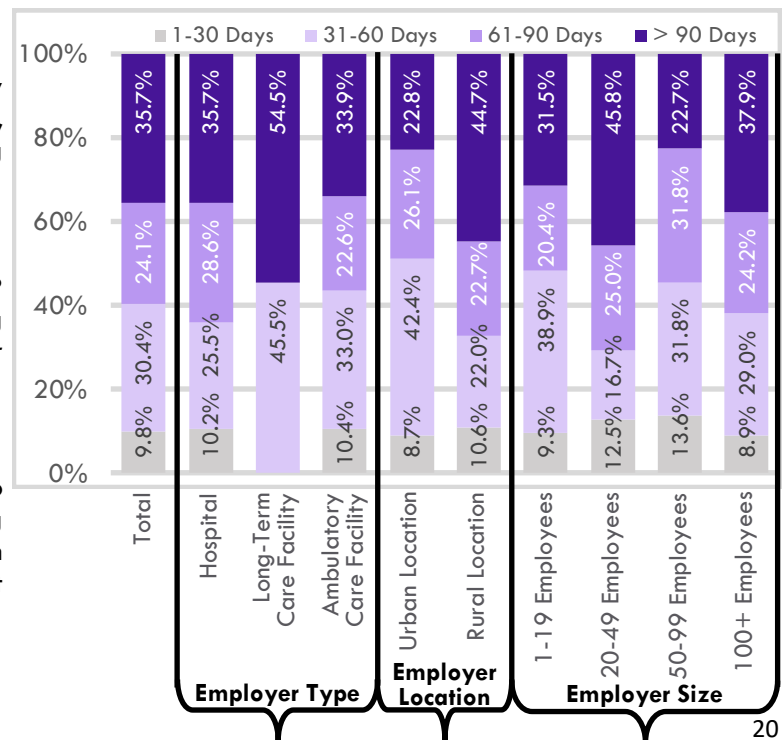


Employer Size

Employers with 20-49 total employees appear to struggle the most among all employer sizes in hiring and recruiting NPs, CRNAs, CNS, and CNMs; with 61.1 percent rating their experience as “somewhat or very difficult.”

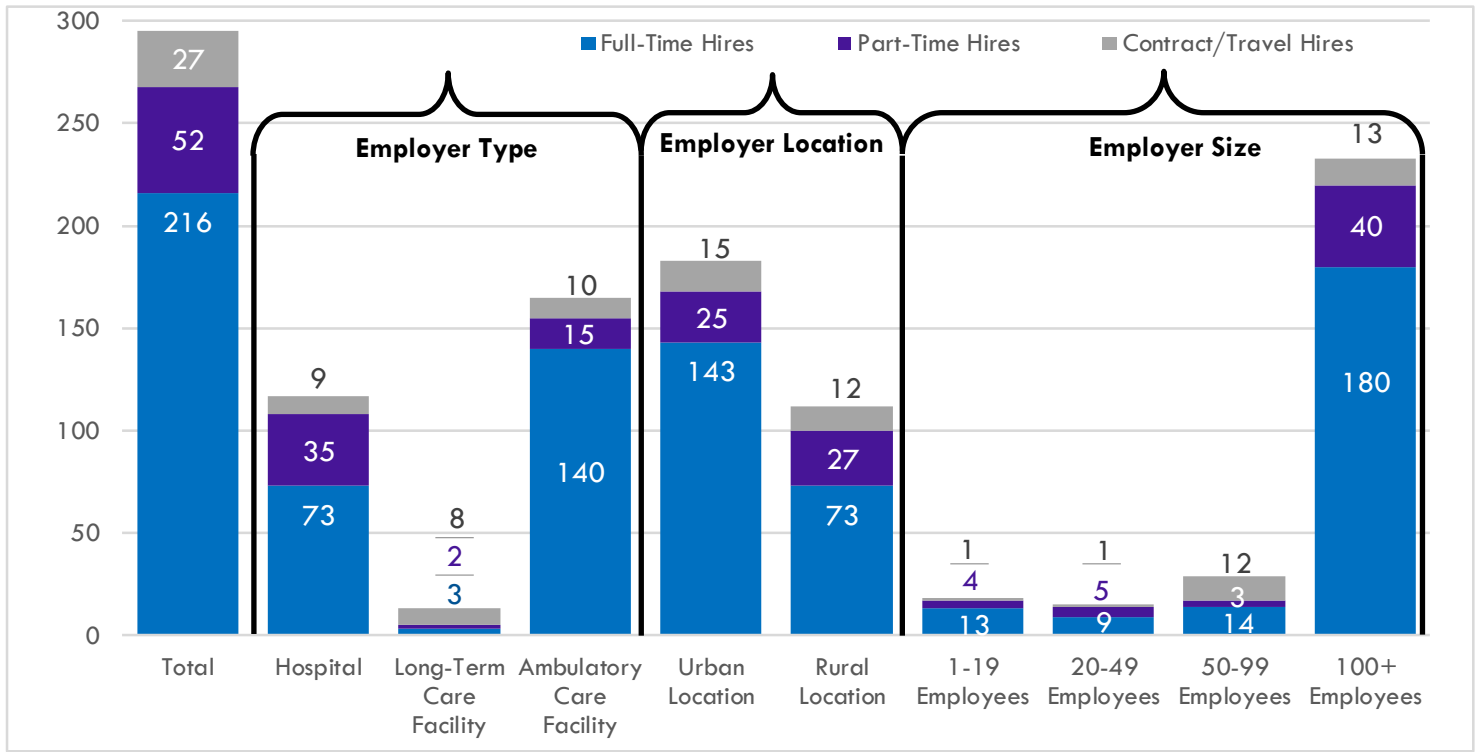
Timeline to Fill Openings

The chart below provides information regarding the amount of time it takes a location to fill an ARNP opening, broken out by employer demographics. Long-term care facilities appear to have the hardest time filling these positions, with 54.5 percent reporting it takes, on average, over 90 days.



Hired ARNPs by Employer Demographics

Respondents were asked how many NPs, CRNAs, CNS, and CNMs were hired at their location in the last 12 months. Results, by employer demographics, can be seen in the chart below. As a percentage of total hires, ambulatory care facilities, represent 55.9 percent of all ARNP hires, which is the greatest among all employer types. In regards to employer location, employers located in urban ZIP Codes represent 62.0 percent of total hires. Lastly, when hires are examined by employer size, employers with 100+ employees hired the greatest number of NPs, CRNAs, CNS, and CNMs combined, representing 79.0 percent of all ARNP hires.



Wages by Employer Demographics

Participating survey takers provided the entry-level hourly wage/annual salary their location offers as well as the maximum hourly wage/annual salary provided to experienced ARNPs. Median wage information by employer demographics are given in the table below.

In general, large employers (100+ employees) offer the highest wages to NPs and CNMs while CRNAs appear to have the highest wages offered at hospitals and rural locations.

Employer Characteristics	Nurse Practitioner				Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist				Certified Nurse Midwife			
	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Maximum Hourly Wage	Entry-Level Annual Salary	Maximum Annual Salary	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Maximum Hourly Wage	Entry-Level Annual Salary	Maximum Annual Salary	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Maximum Hourly Wage	Entry-Level Annual Salary	Maximum Annual Salary
Total (All Respondents)	\$ 42.26	\$ 62.00	\$ 91,760	\$ 126,880	\$ 79.75	\$ 115.63	\$170,909	\$244,800	\$ 44.47	\$ 65.69	\$ 90,502	\$126,056
Hospital	\$ 43.26	\$ 64.75	\$ 93,994	\$ 137,280	\$ 79.75	\$ 116.08	\$167,055	\$247,400	\$ 53.72	\$ 44.57	**	**
Ambulatory Care Facility	\$ 41.90	\$ 60.04	\$ 90,000	\$ 125,112	**	**	**	**	\$ 42.31	\$ 60.15	\$ 88,005	\$125,112
Urban Location	\$ 42.60	\$ 62.40	\$ 92,500	\$ 125,112	\$ 71.73	\$ 98.18	**	**	\$ 42.31	\$ 60.15	\$ 90,502	\$126,056
Rural Location	\$ 41.59	\$ 61.73	\$ 90,760	\$ 126,880	\$ 81.75	\$ 116.08	\$165,680	\$241,813	**	**	**	**
1-19 Employees	\$ 40.05	\$ 59.52	\$ 92,500	\$ 126,880	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
20-49 Employees	\$ 46.20	\$ 60.58	\$ 90,002	\$ 125,112	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
50-99 Employees	\$ 40.00	\$ 55.25	\$ 87,152	\$ 112,200	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
100+ Employees	\$ 43.63	\$ 64.90	\$ 94,994	\$ 137,280	\$ 80.75	\$ 115.86	\$170,909	\$244,800	\$ 46.32	\$ 65.92	\$ 96,500	\$128,500

**Insufficient data available to report wages. Insufficient data available to report wages for Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS). Insufficient data available to report wages for long-term care facilities. Salaries are rounded to the nearest whole dollar. Blue highlighting indicates the areas where the highest wages are offered per level (entry/max). Purple highlighting indicates where the lowest wages are offered per level.

Section Five

Shortages, Recruiting, & Retention

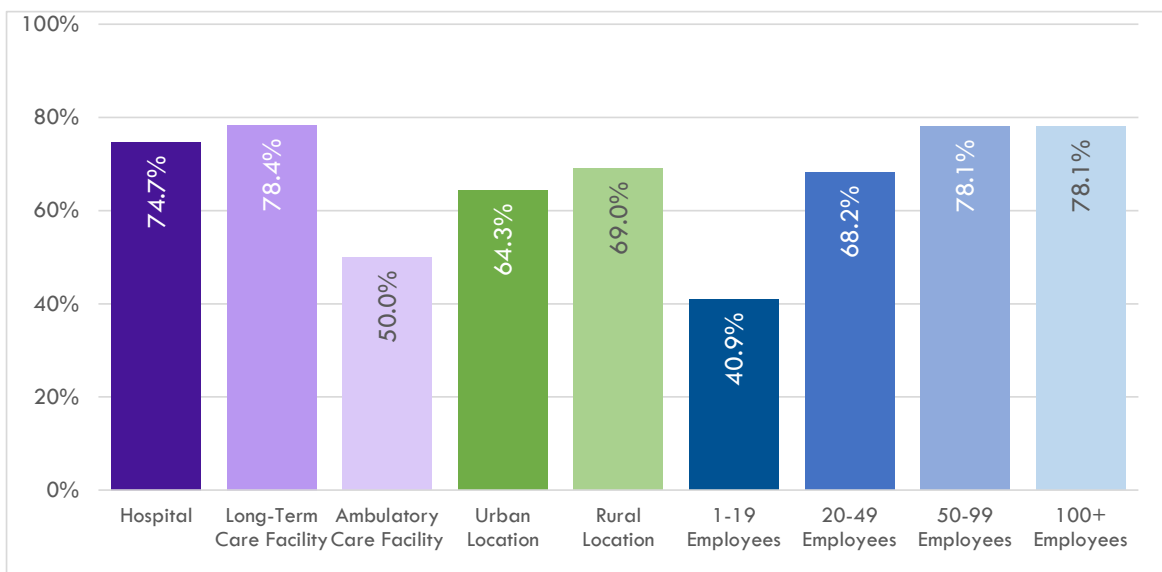
“ I don't understand where all the nurses are going in our area when they graduate. We have one large hospital and several long-term care/skilled nursing facilities but we are all working short staff with nurses...southeastern Iowa definitely has a shortage and it is not getting better. We are a stand alone facility and it is hard to keep up with the competition of higher paying facilities that are big/corporate also.”

Employer Comparisons

The first section of this report provided an overview of survey results regarding shortages and recruiting issues for nursing occupations in Iowa. This section provides a comparison of these same topics by employer type, employer location, and employer size; in order to determine if certain issues are more or less problematic for certain employers based upon these demographics.

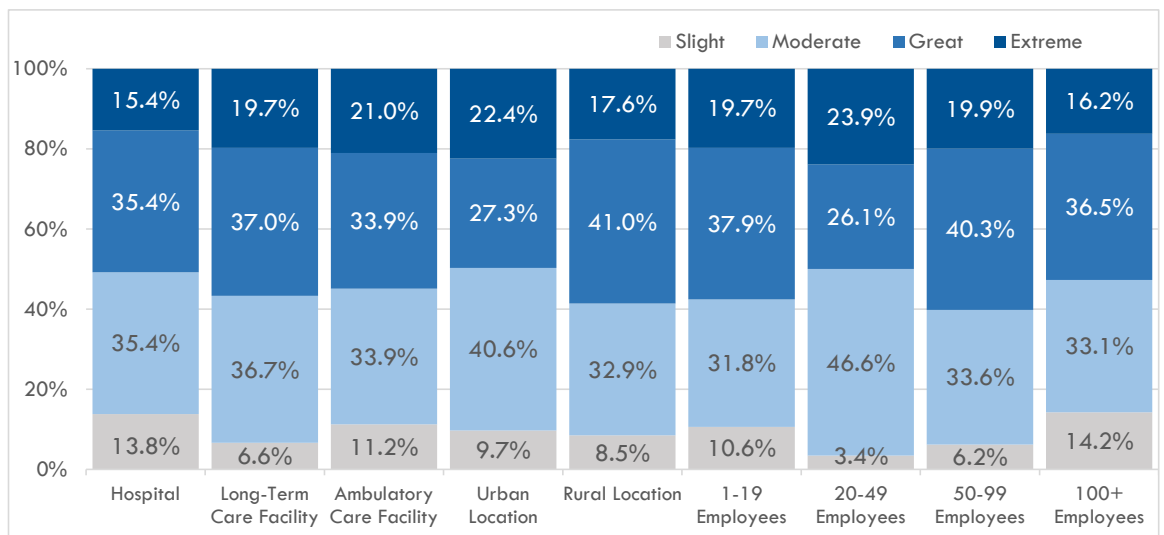
To begin with, survey respondents were asked: *Is there a shortage of qualified job applicants for nursing positions?* The chart below shows the percentage within each employer demographic that responded 'yes' to this question.

Nearly four-fifths (78.4%) of long-term care facility respondents agreed there is a nursing shortage; while among small employers (1-19 employees) only 40.9 percent agreed there is a shortage.

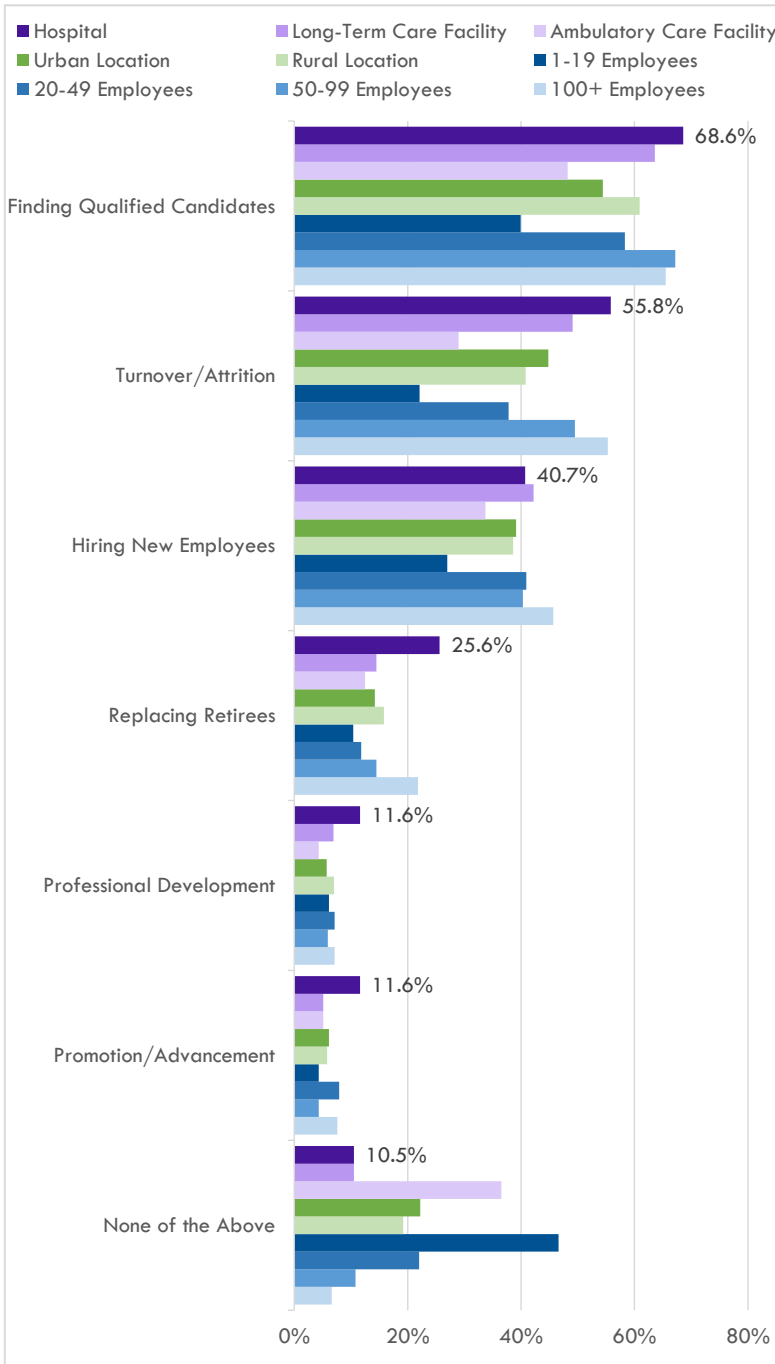


Those that find that there is a current shortage were asked to define the degree. The breakout of their responses, by employer demographics, is in the chart to the right.

With the exception of respondents located in urban ZIP Codes, over 50 percent of respondents in every other category characterized the shortage as either "great" or "extreme." Over three-fifths (60.2%) of respondents whose location employs 50-99 employees reported the shortage as "great" or "extreme."



Workforce Challenges



Finding Qualified Candidates

Is the number one workforce challenge reported by each category of respondents, with the exception of small employers (with 1-19 employees) who indicated that none of the options provided represented their top workforce challenge. However, finding qualified candidates was this group's second highest selected option, with 39.9% reporting it as a challenge.



Turnover/Attrition

For nearly every category of respondents this is the second greatest workforce challenge, with 55.8 percent of respondents representing hospitals selecting it as an issue. However, for employers with 20-49 employees the second biggest issue is in hiring new employees; and ambulatory care facility respondents indicated that none of the options provided represented their second greatest challenge.



Hiring New Employees

Due to cost, available budget, and competition the process and ability of hiring new employees is the third greatest workforce challenge reported among all categories of respondents. The two categories that had the greatest percentage of respondents rate this challenge were employers with 100+ employees (45.7%) and long-term care facilities (42.2%).

Survey respondents were asked to identify what challenges their location faces in regards to hiring and retaining their nursing staff. Respondents were allowed to select multiple challenges, as well as write-in responses.

The top challenges reported, by employer category, are illustrated in the chart on this page. However, the top write-in answers, which aren't displayed, are the following:

- Unable to get nurse candidates to work in a rural location
- Pay rates offered are not competitive
- Candidates are unwilling to work evenings/weekends
- Competition (i.e. being close to a large hospital)

LOCATION



PAY



COMPETITION



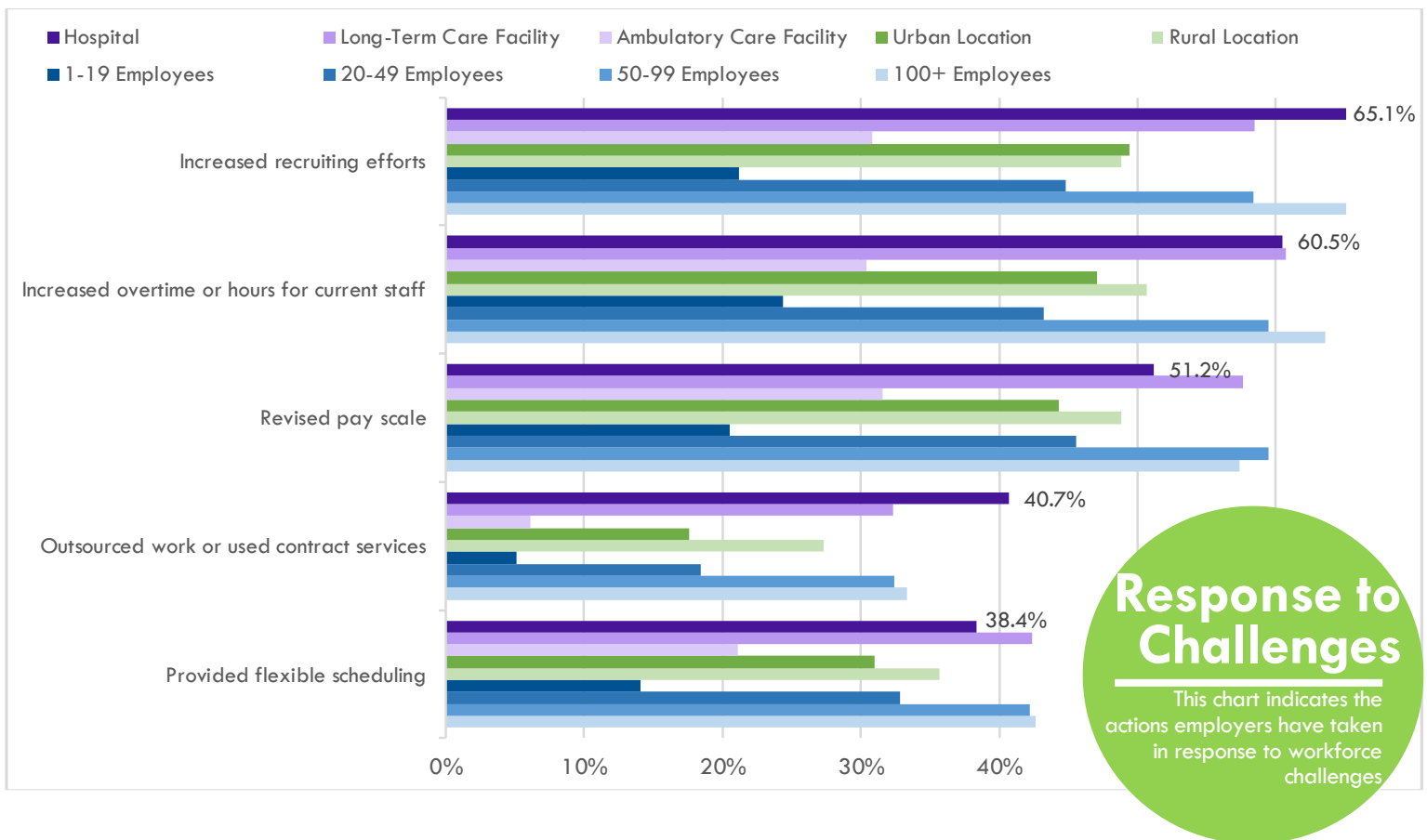
HOURS/SHIFTS



“ I feel there is a challenge

of hiring new nurses for nursing facilities (I have heard this from student nurses). Colleges encourage students to work at hospitals or clinics. I have heard that they do not promote nursing facilities. I would like to see more clinical offers to nursing facilities; in turn we can enlighten students with the satisfied feeling and knowledge they can receive from working in a nursing facility (long-term, skilled, memory care, or assisted living).

”



Response to Challenges
 This chart indicates the actions employers have taken in response to workforce challenges

Response to Workforce Challenges

Respondents were asked to share what steps have been taken at their location in response to nursing workforce challenges. The top results by employer demographic categories can be seen in the 'Response to Challenges' chart above. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers to this question, therefore, the percentage total can exceed 100 percent.

The chart above shows the top five responses for each category of employer demographics. Those top five responses to workforce challenges are: increasing recruiting efforts; increasing overtime/ hours for current staff; revising the pay scale; outsourcing work/ using contract services; and providing flexible scheduling.

However, for ambulatory care facility respondents, those located in an urban ZIP Code, and small and medium sized employers (1-19 and 20-49 employees) 'None of the Above' was a top answer as well. Over 20 percent and up to 45 for each of these categories indicated that none of the options provided represented a response they've taken or will take to counteract workforce challenges.

“ We find there is a huge gap with our nursing programs around the state that do not provide information around home care. We find we need to provide the education to these programs. We are happy to provide this but are challenged by these programs not allowing us to come in and discuss this career choice. ”

Top 3 Responses

The following responses were in the top three for each category of employer demographic



Increasing Recruiting Efforts

Is the number one response, among respondents representing hospitals (65.1%), urban locations (49.4%), and large employers (100+ employees) at 65.1 percent; indicating they are currently doing this or have done this. For all other categories this was the second highest response.



Increasing Overtime or Hours for Current Staff

Is the second most indicated response to nursing workforce challenges among hospitals (60.5%), urban locations (47.1%), and large employers (100+ employees) at 63.6 percent; indicating they do or have done this. Long-term care facility respondents (60.7%), rural locations (50.7%), and employers with 1-19 (24.4%) and 50-99 (59.5%) employees rated this the highest among all responses. Additionally, ambulatory care facility respondents and employers with 20-49 employees indicated this as their second highest response.



Revising the Pay Scale

The third top response among survey takers in all categories, except ambulatory care facilities and employers with 20 to 99 employees which rated it the number one response, in regards to how to respond to workforce challenges was revising the pay scale in order to attract applicants and retain current staff.




Top Difficulties Filling Positions by Employer Demographics

Respondents were given a number of potential reasons their location may have difficulty filling nursing vacancies. They were asked to rate these reasons from strongly agree to strongly disagree.




The top three reasons, in the graphic below, were those which had the greatest percentage of respondents agree or strongly agree were difficulties in filling nursing openings. These results are broken out by employer demographics below.

By Employer Type




Hospital:

-  **A General Lack of Applicants**
68.7% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Local Competition**
67.5% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Lack of Qualified Applicants**
58.3% agreed or strongly agreed

Long-Term Care:

-  **A General Lack of Applicants**
83.0% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Local Competition**
67.9% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Lack of Qualified Applicants**
53.3% agreed or strongly agreed




Ambulatory Care:

-  **A General Lack of Applicants**
50.7% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Expected Wages**
47.7% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Local Competition**
46.9% agreed or strongly agreed




“ The shortage is being felt particularly hard in long-term care and other non-acute care settings. The draw for new graduates is focused in the acute care setting; leaving the other areas with a severe and significant lack of qualified applicants. Nursing programs are limited in the number of applicants to the nursing programs and have long waiting lists; however, the graduating classes tend to be greatly reduced in number from the number that initially enrolled. ”

By Employer Location

Urban:

-  **A General Lack of Applicants**
67.1% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Local Competition**
63.6% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Lack of Qualified Applicants**
53.6% agreed or strongly agreed

Rural:

-  **A General Lack of Applicants**
70.6% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Local Competition**
58.1% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Lack of Qualified Applicants**
50.3% agreed or strongly agreed




“ Wages are a major concern for home health strategists like myself. When competing for a dwindling pool of qualified candidates with major hospitals, it leaves the reimbursement structure of those companies that primarily utilize Medicaid funding in the lurch. ”

We are looking at altering our recruitment strategies, to primarily focus on LPN acquisition and targeting older/seasoned nurses who are at or near retirement age, as the cares we provide are minute compared to our peers at hospitals or nursing homes.




Our reimbursement structure allows us to be more competitive in these two areas and can entice them to make the jump to home health. ”

By Employer Size




1-19 Employees:

-  **A General Lack of Applicants**
45.8% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Expected Wages**
44.8% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Local Competition**
43.0% agreed or strongly agreed




20-49 Employees:

-  **A General Lack of Applicants**
67.8% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Lack of Qualified Applicants**
54.3% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Local Competition**
53.0% agreed or strongly agreed

50-99 Employees:

-  **A General Lack of Applicants**
82.9% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Local Competition**
67.6% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Lack of Qualified Applicants**
56.9% agreed or strongly agreed

100+ Employees:

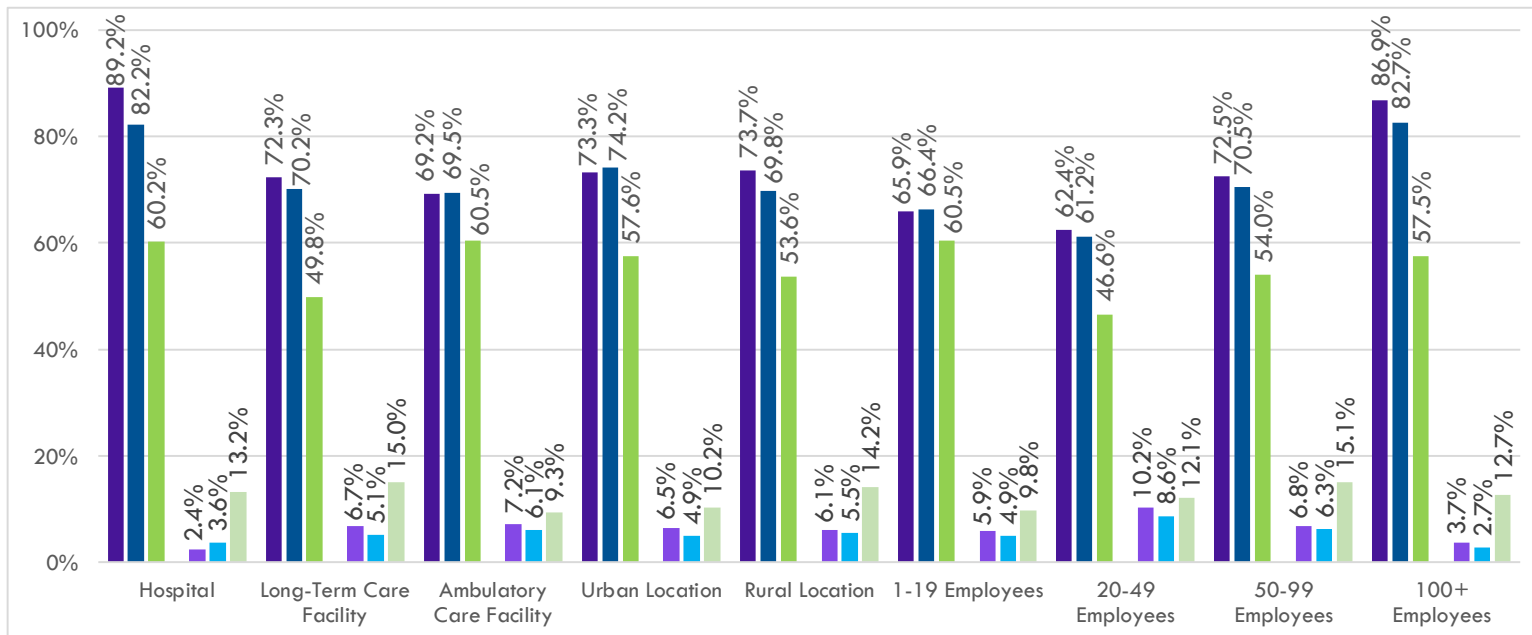
-  **A General Lack of Applicants**
74.8% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Local Competition**
70.6% agreed or strongly agreed
-  **Lack of Qualified Applicants**
54.7% agreed or strongly agreed

“ Due to the small size of our facility and the private ownership, our resources pale in comparison to the corporate machine. ”

Quality of Applicants by Employer Demographics

Respondents were asked to rate their experience with nursing applicants, in regards to quality, from strongly agree to strongly disagree when it comes to applicants fulfilling job requirements. For each employer category the dark colored column shows the percentage of respondents who **agree or strongly agree** with the statement. The subsequent set of lighter colored columns for each category represent the percentage who **disagree or strongly disagree** with the statement.

The sum of those who agree and disagree with each statement by each employer category below will not equal 100 percent. This difference represents those respondents that stated they were 'neutral'.



In general, applicants fulfill necessary requirements

■ Agree/Strongly Agree
■ Disagree/Strongly Disagree

Applicants fulfill the "hard" skills

■ Agree/Strongly Agree
■ Disagree/Strongly Disagree

Applicants fulfill the "soft" skills

■ Agree/Strongly Agree
■ Disagree/Strongly Disagree

Note: "Hard" skills include teachable and measurable abilities, basic or technical, that apply directly to the job; such as: maintaining records, monitoring patients, taking vitals, equipment operation, learning software systems, etc. "Soft" skills are associated with an individual's habits, personality, and character; such as: dependability, honesty, attitude, motivation, demeanor, etc.

For every employer category, over 62 percent 'agree or strongly agree' that applicants for nursing positions at their location fulfill the general necessary requirements for the job. Respondents who represent hospitals and large employers (100+ employees) have the highest percentage that agree with this statement at 89.2 percent and 86.9 percent, respectively.

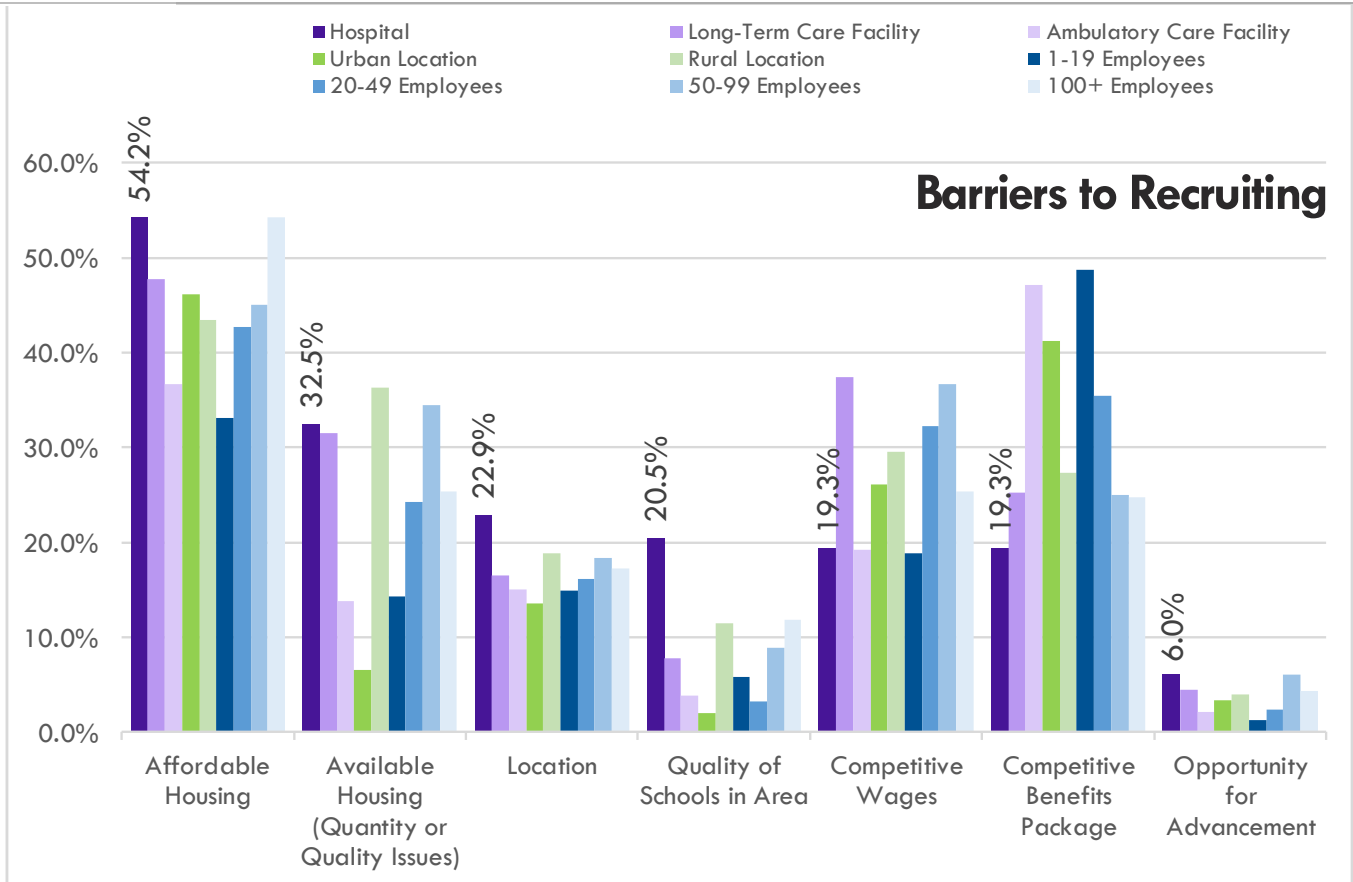
In regards to "hard" skill requirements, for every employer category, 61 percent or more agree that applicants fulfill the necessary requirements. Additionally, in regards to "soft" skills, each employer category reported 46 percent or more agreeing that nursing applicants fulfill requirements. The highest percentage of respondents agreeing with this statement represent ambulatory care facilities and small employers (1-19 employees) at 60.5 percent, each.

Among those that "disagree or strongly disagree" that applicants fulfill requirements, the "soft" skills have the highest percentage of respondents reporting a lack of qualified candidates. Each category of employers had greater than 10 percent disagree that applicants have the required "soft" skills, with the exception of ambulatory care facility respondents and small employer respondents (1-19 employees) at 9.3 and 9.8 percent.



“ The demand of good nurses, both LPN and RN, has greatly increased and far surpassed the supply of quality nurses available. This has impacted the ability of facilities to improve the quality of care given to residents because facilities may have a sub-standard employee; but due to need are not able to find others to replace that employee.

”



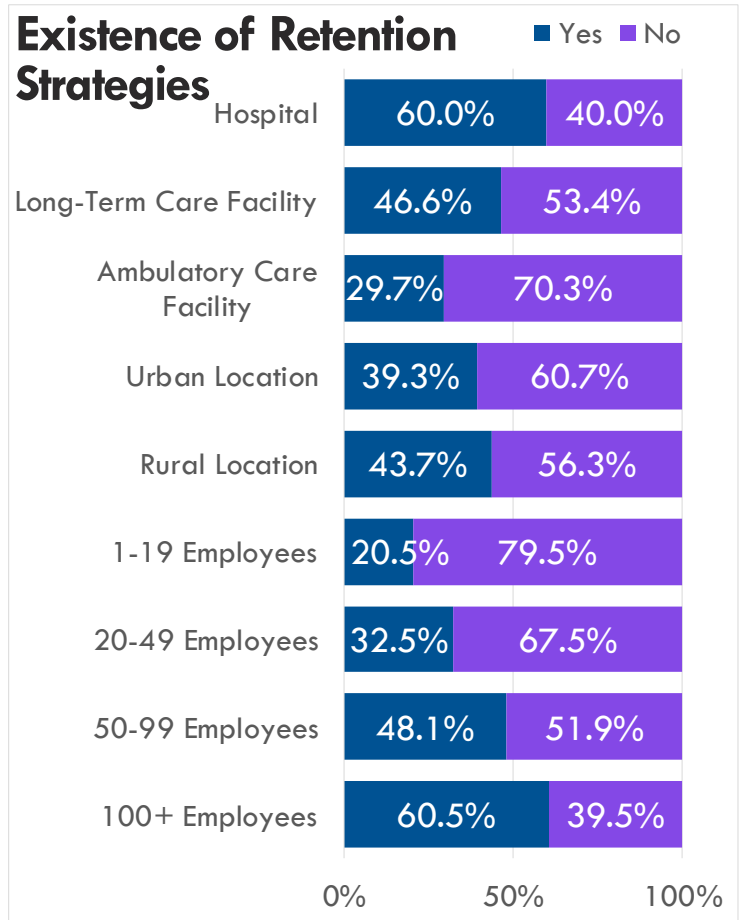
Barriers to Recruiting by Employer Demographics

Respondents were asked to share what barriers they have encountered when recruiting nurses at their location. [The results to this question can be seen in the chart above.](#) Each employer category reported the same top seven issues, with the exception of employers with 1-19 employees, which had 1.9 percent report “applicants unwilling to work evenings/weekends” as a top barrier. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers to this question, therefore, the percentage total may exceed 100 percent.

- Affordable housing in the area is the top barrier reported for all employer categories with the exception of ambulatory care facilities and employers with 1-19 employees
- Competitive benefits package offered is the top barrier for ambulatory care facility respondents as well as for respondents with 1-19 employees

Retention Strategies

Respondents were asked: Does this location use any nurse retention strategies? The results to this question by each employer category are seen in the chart to the right. In general, the majority in seven out of nine categories stated “no,” they do not use retention strategies. Additional retention strategy information is detailed on the next page.



Retention Strategies by Employer Demographics

Survey participants who indicated that they do employ retention strategies for nursing employees were asked to indicate which strategies they use. The results are in the table below broken out by each employer category. The top 13 results for each area are presented. The table is sorted high-to-low for the hospital category; however, the number one answer for each category is highlighted green. The strategies of 'quarterly reviews' (40.0%) and 'mentorship programs' (30.0%) were among the top strategies reported for employers with 1-19 employees but are not represented in the following table.

Retention Strategy	Hospital	Long-Term Care Facility	Ambulatory Care Facility	Urban Location	Rural Location	1-19 Employees	20-49 Employees	50-99 Employees	100+ Employees
Shift Differential Pay	94.0%	74.0%	33.8%	60.8%	70.7%	26.7%	46.3%	74.7%	79.6%
Onboarding & Orientation	90.0%	69.3%	85.9%	87.6%	71.8%	86.7%	68.3%	69.0%	85.0%
Clean & Safe Work Environment	88.0%	83.3%	83.1%	88.7%	81.6%	86.7%	90.2%	75.9%	87.6%
A Culture of Open Communication	86.0%	84.0%	88.7%	89.7%	83.3%	93.3%	90.2%	83.9%	83.2%
Competitive Benefits	82.0%	61.3%	83.1%	77.3%	67.2%	73.3%	70.7%	60.9%	77.9%
Recognition & Rewards Systems	78.0%	60.7%	54.9%	64.9%	60.9%	46.7%	51.2%	59.8%	72.6%
Exit Interviews	76.0%	43.3%	66.2%	51.5%	57.5%	66.7%	48.8%	44.8%	62.8%
Competitive Wages	72.0%	76.7%	73.2%	73.2%	75.9%	66.7%	85.4%	71.3%	76.1%
Healthy Work/Life Balance	70.0%	69.3%	93.0%	84.5%	70.7%	96.7%	65.9%	72.4%	76.1%
Clear-cut Expectations & Policies	60.0%	50.0%	70.4%	56.7%	57.5%	66.7%	58.5%	57.5%	54.0%
Flexible Staffing	56.0%	57.3%	56.3%	48.5%	61.5%	53.3%	48.8%	66.7%	53.1%
Selective Hiring	52.0%	38.0%	40.8%	48.5%	37.4%	33.3%	31.7%	42.5%	46.0%
Meaningful Opportunities	46.0%	44.0%	42.3%	51.5%	39.7%	50.0%	31.7%	47.1%	44.2%

Nurse Residency Programs

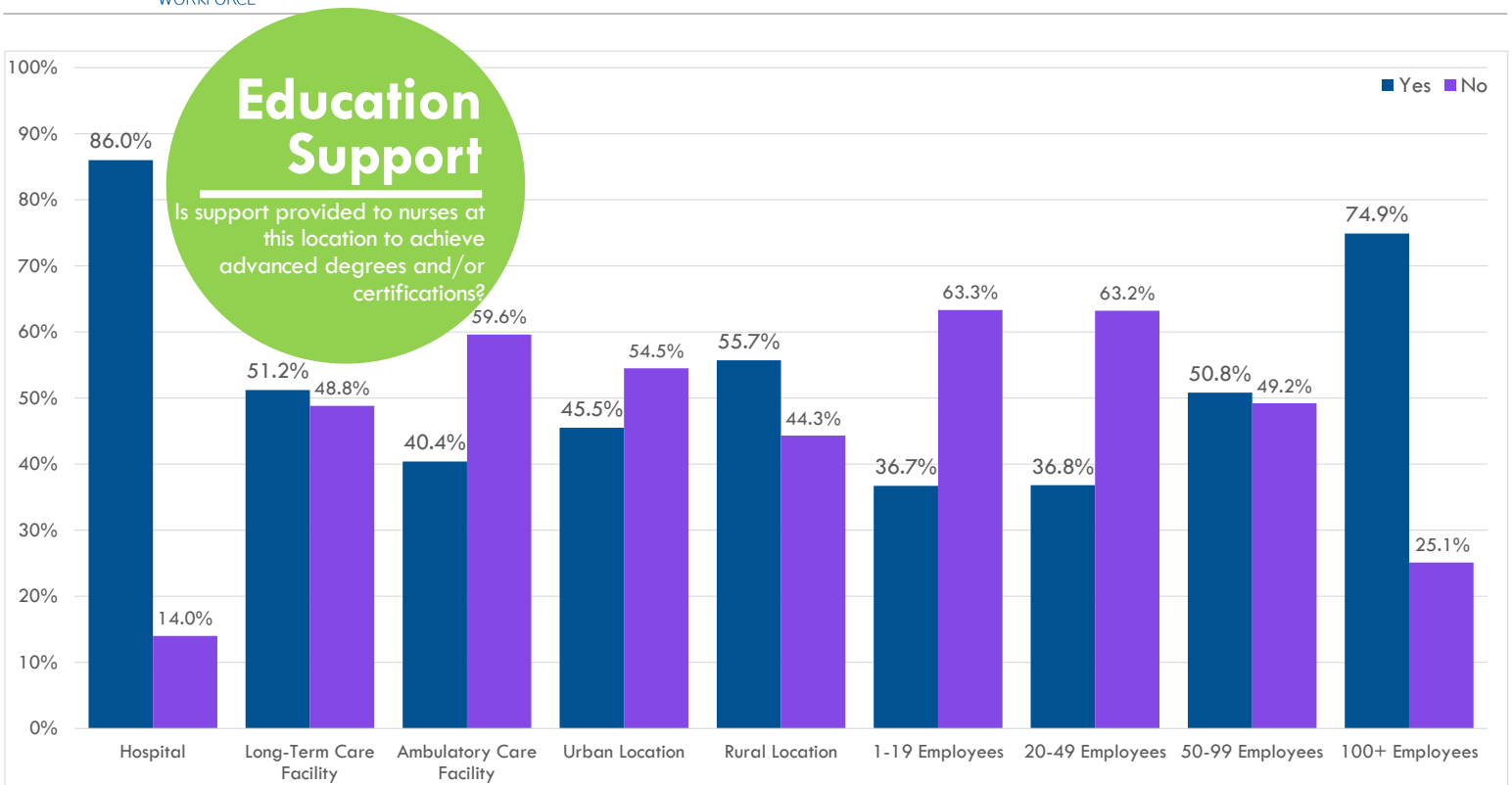
Survey participants were asked: Is there a nurse residency program offered to nurses at this location? To this question, an overwhelming percentage of respondents answered, 'no'. By employer category, only two categories had less than 90 percent answer 'no' to this question.

- **67.1%** of hospital respondents said they do not provide a nurse residency program; **32.9%** said that they do
- **84.3%** of respondents with 100+ employees said they do not provide a nurse residency program; **15.7%** said that they do

A follow-up question was asked of survey participants who answered that their location offers a nurse residency program. They were asked: How is this nurse residency program managed? For some employer category breakouts there was an insufficient number of responses to report results. The following outlines results for those with adequate responses for analysis.

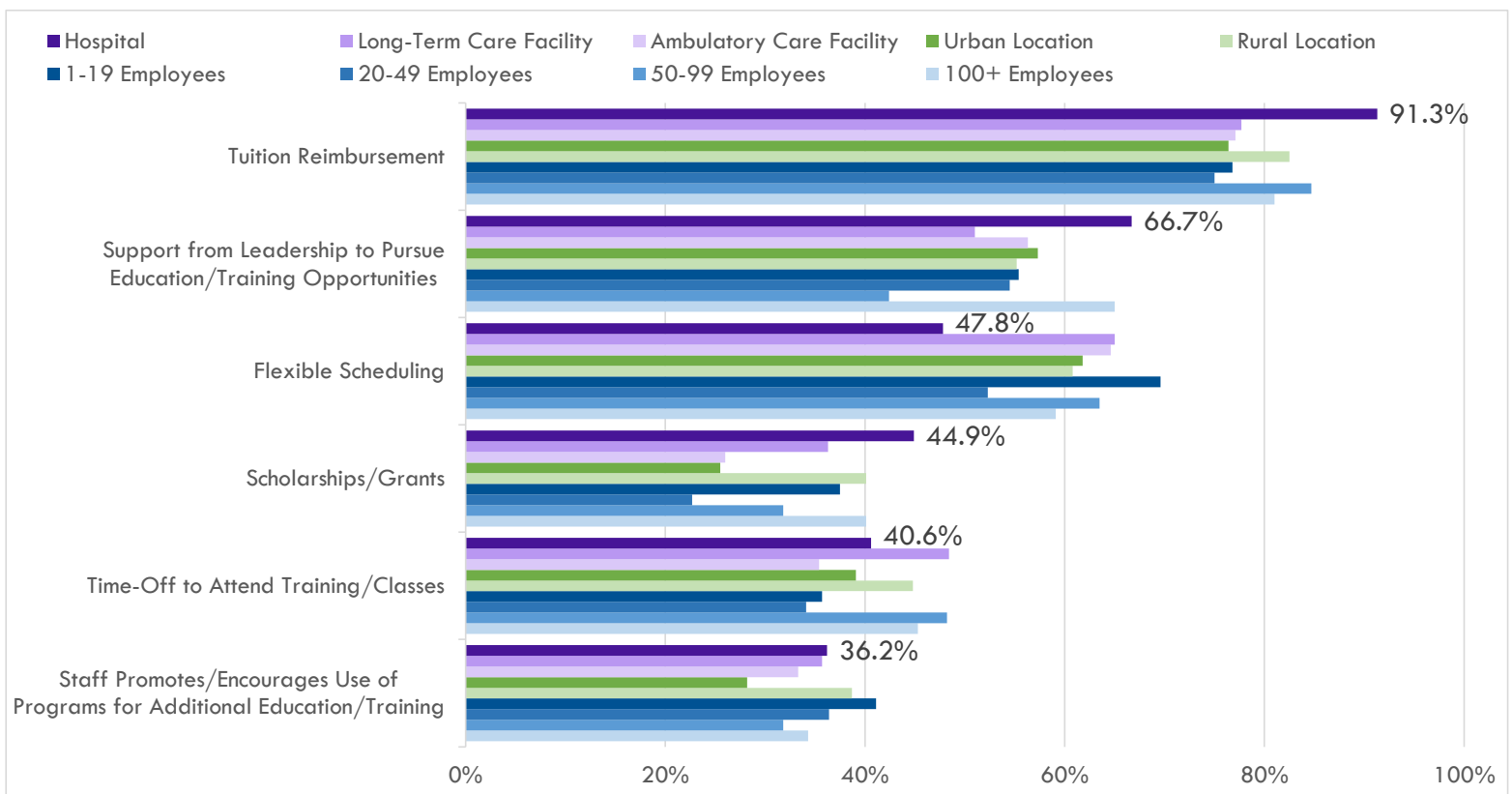
- **HOSPITALS:** 92.6% manage their nurse residency program; 7.4% have it managed by a third party
- **AMBULATORY CARE FACILITIES:** 100% manage their nurse residency program
- **URBAN LOCATIONS:** 100% manage their nurse residency program
- **RURAL LOCATIONS:** 76.5% manage their nurse residency program; 23.5% have it managed by a third party
- **1-19 EMPLOYEES:** 100% manage their nurse residency program
- **100+ EMPLOYEES:** 89.3% manage their nurse residency program; 10.7% have it managed by a third party

“ Work life balance is a continuous struggle... I think if this was kept in check we would have significantly less turnover. ”



Educational Support Provided

Those respondents that indicated they provide support to their nursing staff to pursue education and training opportunities were asked what kind of support was provided. The chart below shows the top six response for each of the employer categories analyzed. The greatest percentage of respondents within each category reported “tuition reimbursement” as a mode of support they offer.



Survey Highlights

- Nearly three-fifths (58.5%) of respondents reported a shortage of qualified applicants for the needed nursing positions. Nearly 80% of long-term care facilities agree there is a nursing shortage; while among small employers (1-19 employees) only 40.9% agree there is a shortage.
- The greatest reason cited as a workforce challenge is difficulty finding qualified candidates with turnover/attrition cited as the second greatest workforce challenge.
- To meet workforce challenges, employers have increased overtime for staff, increased recruiting efforts, revised pay scales, provided flexible scheduling or outsourced work or used contract services.
- The top difficulties filling vacancies are reported as a general lack of applicants by over two-thirds (69.2%) of the respondents.
- Barriers for recruiting are competitive wages and benefits, location of the job opening, or opportunities for advancement. Additional reasons include candidates are unwilling to work evenings and/or weekend, candidates lack experience in specialized area.
- Retirements are top of mind for many employers with an increase seen in the last 12 months and over 550 nurses who are eligible to retire in the next year.
- When asked about the ease of recruiting and hiring over 80% of respondents considered it somewhat to very difficult to hire LPNs and RNs; for ARNPs, 43% of respondents said it was difficult to hire.
- Approximately one-third of all respondents reported it takes on average over 90 days to hire LPNs, RNs, and ARNPs in the state.
- With the exception of respondents located in urban zip codes, over 50% of respondents in every other category characterized the shortage as either “great” or “extreme.” Likewise, over 60% of respondents whose location employs 50 – 99 employees reported the shortage as “great” or “extreme.”

In summary, nurse workforce challenges exist throughout the state of Iowa and across all locations, all facility types and all employer sizes. This demand survey report provides a statistical snapshot that Iowa employers want to hire more nurses – yet the supply of nurses is lacking. Nursing supply data is analyzed in the Iowa Board of Nursing’s *Trends in Nursing* report, which is typically published every three years. Until such time as the demand and supply data can be combined, the data supplied in this report is largely descriptive in nature. The limitations of this report include the year in which the data was gathered (2020) and under the conditions of a worldwide pandemic. It will take the work of all nurse workforce stakeholders to solve the recruitment and retention problems illustrated and reported here.

Recognitions

The Iowa Board of Nursing would like to thank the Iowa Center for Nursing Workforce Advisory Committee members for their input and advice in the development of the Center’s first demand survey. Additionally, the Iowa Board of Nursing staff are grateful for the assistance, direction and technical assistance provided by the Labor Market Information Division of Iowa Workforce Development under the leadership of Ryan Murphy, Bureau Chief.

Lastly, the Iowa Board of Nursing is thankful to all employers who participated in this survey; allowing us to more clearly see the issues involved in the demand for nursing staff across the state of Iowa.

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