

## Nursing Career Ladder in Skilled Nursing Facilities

Skilled nursing facilities provide a unique opportunity to let nurses advance their career alongside building meaningful relationships with colleagues and residents. Unlike other professions where you might have to leave the organization to develop skills and have opportunities to use more technical skills, staff can progress from a certified nursing assistant (CNA) to a licensed practical nurse (LPN) to a registered nurse (RN) while remaining at a facility.

Skilled nursing facilities can establish Nurse Aide Training and Competency Evaluation Programs, which allow individuals to learn on the job while earning a salary to become a CNA in four to five weeks. CNAs play a key role in aiding residents with activities of daily living, like bathing and eating, and supporting nursing teams with treatment.

To progress to managing more challenging aspects of patient care, like wound care and vital sign monitoring, a CNA can pursue becoming an LPN by taking an online or in-person nursing education program. These typically take 12 months and prepare the individual to take the licensing exam needed to become an LPN.

At the next level, RNs can carry out diagnostic tests, manage and mentor other nursing staff, and help create care plans for residents. To receive an RN license, you have to complete a two-year associate's degree or a four-year bachelor's of science in nursing.

The perks of making the journey from CNA to LPN to RN include more responsibilities, more challenging work, a deeper understanding and relationship with residents and families, and higher pay.



### Nurses going from<sup>1</sup>

CNA to LPN

**45,739**

LPN to RN

**32,724**

### Nurse Aide Training Programs in SNFs

**3,161<sup>2</sup>**

### Employment and Average Hourly Wages in SNFs<sup>3</sup>

CNA

**447,940**

EMPLOYEES

**\$16.90**  
PER HOUR

LPN

**171,030**

EMPLOYEES

**\$28.10**  
PER HOUR

RN

**124,690**

EMPLOYEES

**\$37.11**  
PER HOUR

#### Method:

Payroll-based journal employee-detail staffing data was examined from quarter 2 of 2020 to quarter 1 of 2023 for the nation.

#### References:

- CNA, LPN, and RN: Multiple entry points to a rewarding career in nursing - <https://www.laboure.edu/blog/rn-vs-lpn-vs-cna>
- The Nursing Career Ladder: CAN to LPN/LVN to RN - <https://www.resumebuilder.com/nursing-career-ladder/>

<sup>1</sup> Analysis of Payroll-Based Journal (PBJ) Employee-Detail Data from 2020q2 to 2023q1 - <https://data.cms.gov/quality-of-care/payroll-based-journal-employee-detail-nursing-home-staffing>

<sup>2</sup> CMS CASPER Survey and Certification Data. October 2023

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics. May 2022. NAICS 623100 – Nursing Care Facilities - [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/naics4\\_623100.htm](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/naics4_623100.htm)