

Rural Outreach Nursing Education (RONE) project of Lower Columbia College

Description

The RONE project provides nursing education to areas of Washington that have limited access, helping address a critical skill shortage through classes delivered over the web. It is the only pre-licensure e-learning nursing program in the state and has been approved by the Washington Nursing Commission and accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission. Rural hospitals, clinics and other outpatient facilities provide hands-on clinical experience as part of this two-year associate degree registered nurse program.

In 2006, Ferry County Hospital issued a call to “any college or university” in Washington to help with the critical shortage of licensed nurses in rural and remote areas. Lower Columbia College, on the other side of the state, responded to the challenge and now provides the e-learning courses. In January 2009, the first class of 11 students was admitted at hospitals and health care centers in Republic, Morton, Goldendale and Port Townsend. Another 100 students taking pre-nursing classes with an interest in RONE are located in: Ellensburg, Loon Lake, Colville, Chewelah, Coulee, Snoqualmie, Forks, Ocean Park, Friday Harbor, Willapa Harbor, Davenport and the Indian Health Service Clinic in Neah Bay.

By recruiting within their community and providing the training on-site, rural communities can now grow their own nursing staffs. Several other states have contacted Lower Columbia College about the RONE project in hopes of replicating it.



Results

Total hospital cost to train one RN through RONE is \$42,000 compared to the \$100,000 the hospital would spend to recruit and compensate a trained nurse. Lower Columbia College's per student costs are comparable with campus-based nursing students (roughly \$11,000 for two years), but no additional classroom buildings are needed.

Partners

Western Washington Area Health Education Center
Eastern Washington Partnership
Washington Center for Nursing
Washington State Hospital Association's Health Work Force Institute
Ferry County Hospital, Republic
Jefferson Health Care, Port Townsend
Morton General Hospital, Morton
Klickitat Valley Hospital, Goldendale

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