

Nurse Educator's Guide to Best Teaching Practice: A Case-Based Approach

The Highest Paying Nursing Jobs in 2023, Plus Salary and Requirements

Highest Paid Nursing Jobs:

If you're considering becoming a nurse, or looking to make a career change as a nurse, you're likely wondering how much you can make and how you can earn the highest nurse salary. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Registered nurses earn a median annual salary of \$77,600 as of 2021. But that's just an average across all specialties, with some of the highest paying nursing careers paying over \$195K annually!

How much you get paid as a nurse will also depend on where you work, what degree you hold (nurses with a master's in nursing often earn far more than BSN-prepared nurses), and what industry you work in. Read on to learn about all the different types of nurses and salaries.

Highest Paying States for Nurses

State	Hourly Pay	Annual Salary	California	\$59.62	\$124,000	Hawaii	\$51.22	\$106,530
Oregon	\$47.42	\$98,630	District of Columbia	\$47.38	\$98,540	Alaska	\$46.74	\$97,230

Source: BLS

Highest Paying Cities for Nurses

City	Hourly Pay	Annual Salary	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	\$74.63	\$155,230
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	\$72.90	\$151,640	Vallejo-Fairfield, CA	\$70.37	\$146,360
Santa Rosa, CA	\$68.00	\$141,440	Napa, CA	\$67.15	\$139,680

Source: BLS

Highest Paying Industries for Nurses

Industry	Hourly Pay	Annual Salary	Nonscheduled Air Transportation	\$54.15	\$112,630
Pharmaceutical and Medicine Manufacturing	\$50.61	\$105,270	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	\$48.67	\$101,240
Federal Executive Branch	\$46.93	\$97,600	Office Administration Services	\$46.46	\$96,630

Source: BLS

Find Nursing Programs Current Degree Current Degree No Degree/License ADN (RN) BSN (RN) MSN (RN) LPN/LVN Medical Assistant CNA Paramedic Other Desired Degree Desired Degree Show Me Programs

To help you decide which career direction is right for you, take a look at some of the highest paid nursing specialties. Keep in mind that salaries do vary greatly based on location and employer, so the earnings listed below are just a baseline to help with your research. The top 15 highest paying nursing jobs are:

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The Highest Paid Nurses in 2023

1. Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA): Annual \$195,610 or \$94.04/hr*

What is the highest-paid nurse? Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists! Earning \$195,610 annually, CRNAs earn significantly more than any other type of nurse or nursing specialty. This highly skilled profession involves preparing and administering anesthesia to patients in collaboration with surgeons, anesthesiologists, dentists, podiatrists, and other qualified healthcare professionals, according to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists earn a median salary of \$195,610 per year according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, making it the top paying nursing specialty. CRNAs typically work 40 hours per week, making the hourly wage average out to approximately \$94.04 per hour.

Career Outlook for CRNAs

According to the BLS, the expected growth for CRNAs is 45% from 2020 to 2030.

Requirements to Become a Nurse Anesthetist

Be prepared to hit the books in order to achieve a degree from an accredited nurse anesthesia educational program, and upon completion, passing the National Certification Examination.

Although a doctoral degree is not yet required to become a CRNA, it will be required in the future as the Council on Accreditation has announced a doctoral degree as a requirement by 2025.

CRNA Jobs

Employers include hospitals, clinics, free-standing surgical centers, ambulatory centers, pain management centers, and staffing agencies.

Show Me CRNA Programs

2. General Nurse Practitioner: Annual \$120,680 or \$58.02/hr*

As a general nurse practitioner, you can choose to open an independent practice or work in a variety of primary care settings. You can also advance your skills and your earning potential along the way. General NPs can later specialize in a field, if they wish.

General nurse practitioners earn a median salary of \$120,680 per year, according to the May 2021 BLS. General nurse practitioners typically work 40 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$58.02.

Career Outlook for Nurse Practitioners

Nurse Practitioner jobs (which include general) are expected to grow 45 percent through 2030, per the BLS. Add to that the option to work independently, and the outlook for this specialty is robust.

Requirements to Become a Nurse Practitioner

A Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) is the minimum degree requirement for becoming a nurse practitioner, followed by earning Nurse Practitioner licensure as specified by your state.

Nurse Practitioner Jobs

Employers include hospitals, clinics, urgent care, outpatient clinics, private practice, and staffing agencies.

3. ICU Nurse: Annual \$120,243 or \$57.81/hr*

ICU nurses require a specialized set of skills since they literally deal with life-and-death matters on a daily basis. They often work in hospital ICUs but also can work in other areas of nursing. Becoming a critical care nurse is seen as one of the most coveted positions in nursing, as these nurses possess a very high level of critical thinking and nursing skills.

ICU Nurse Salary

The average annual salary for ICU Nurses was \$120,243 as of June 2022, according to ZipRecruiter. While the range typically falls between \$76,500 and \$145,500, critical care nurses often make well over \$200,000 based on their shift, hospital, and location. New nurses generally start at the lower end of the pay scale before quickly moving up. Critical care nurses typically work 36 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$57.81 on average.

Career Outlook for ICU Nurses

When you hear about nursing shortages, the biggest areas in need include adult critical care units, pediatric and neonatal ICUs, and emergency departments. That's why ICU nurses should generally have no problem finding work.

Requirements to Become an ICU Nurse

While no specific credentials are needed to begin working in critical care, in order to advance, you should consider the CCRN certification exam. Most hospitals will have specific training for intensive care nurses to ensure they are confident in their skills and abilities.

ICU Nurse Jobs

Employers include hospitals, managed care facilities, outpatient surgical centers, administration, research committees, cardiac catheter labs, post-anesthesia care units, emergency departments, cardiac centers, urgent care clinics, short-term stay hospitals, and staffing agencies. Critical care nurses can specialize in adult critical care, pediatric critical care, or geriatric critical care.

Show Me Critical Care Nursing Programs

4. Neonatal Intensive Care Nurse: Annual \$118,586 or \$57.00/hr*

If you love caring for babies, consider becoming a neonatal intensive care (NICU) nurse. This specialty commands a strong salary, especially for advanced practice nurses.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Nurse Salary

The average annual NICU nurse salary is \$118,586, according to ZipRecruiter. Those with a BSN, more experience, and advanced certifications have higher earning potential. NICU nurses typically work 36 hours per week, giving them an average hourly rate of \$57.00.

Career Outlook for Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Nurses

Both advances in technology and the frequency of premature births have contributed to a strong job outlook for neonatal nurses.

Requirements to Become a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Nurse

While you can get neonatal unit experience as a staff RN, earning either a neonatal nurse practitioner (NNP) or neonatal clinical nurse specialist (CNS) designation is how the real advancement takes place. An advancement in degree comes with a salary bump as well. Nurses who wish to earn certification without an advanced practice degree can earn their RNC-NIC.

NICU Nurse Jobs

Employers include hospitals, private practice, birth centers, neonatal intensive care units, well-baby units, newborn nursery, private consultant, private duty baby nurse, pediatric outpatient clinics, and staffing agencies.

5. Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner: Annual \$113,114 or \$63.75/hr*

For nurses with an interest in mental health, working as a psychiatric nurse practitioner will give you the opportunity to work with psychiatric medical physicians and counsel patients regarding mental health disorders. Psychiatric nurse practitioners also work with patients that suffer from a combination of mental health disorders and substance abuse issues.

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Salary

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners earn, on average, \$113,114 per year, as of May 2022 according to Payscale. Psychiatric nurse practitioners typically work 40 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$63.75.

Career Outlook for Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners

As the need for improved mental healthcare gains national attention, and the demand for adolescent and child psychiatric services increases, PNP's will be highly sought after. Additionally, as substance abuse continues to rise throughout the country, PNP's will need to become well versed in both mental health and substance abuse issues.

>> See the Top 10 Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Programs

Requirements to Become a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner

A Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) is the minimum degree requirement for becoming a nurse practitioner, followed by earning Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner licensure as specified by your state.

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Jobs

Employers include hospitals, mental health units, inpatient psychiatric hospitals, outpatient clinics, and staffing agencies.

Show Me Online Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Programs

6. Certified Nurse Midwife: Annual \$112,830 or \$54.24/hr*

For RNs who love obstetrics, labor and delivery, and prenatal care, becoming a Certified Nurse Midwife is the perfect career path. CNMs mostly work in OB/GYN offices, clinics, or hospital settings, but many open their own practices depending on their state of practice.

Certified Nurse Midwife Salary

The average certified nurse-midwife salary is \$112,830 per the BLS. CNMs typically work 40 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$54.24.

Career Outlook for Certified Nurse Midwives

The job outlook for midwives is beyond good, with expectations that openings will grow 45 percent during the 2020 to 2030 decade.

Requirements to Become a Certified Nurse Midwife

To practice certified nurse midwifery, nurses can go through the American Midwifery Certification Board to earn the Certified Nurse-Midwife and Certified Midwife designations.

Certified Nurse Midwife Jobs

Employers include hospitals, freestanding birthing clinics, private practice clinics, and staffing agencies.

Show Me Nurse Midwife Programs

7. Clinical Nurse Specialist: Annual \$112,267 or \$54.00/hr*

Those who wish to work in a specialized unit or clinic should consider the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) path. In addition to diagnosing and treating various conditions, you'll be looked upon as an expert within your healthcare team. Clinical Nurse Specialists focus on improving the status of nursing at the hospital. They are involved in research and bettering the care provided in the healthcare setting.

Clinical Nurse Specialist Salary

According to Salary.com, the average salary for clinical nurse specialists in the United States is \$112,267. However, there is a range of salaries for this specialty, typically between \$101,514 and \$122,976. Clinical nurse specialists typically work 40 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$54.00.

Career Outlook for Clinical Nurse Specialists

Because Clinical Nurse Specialists can offer specialized care at a lower cost than a physician, more and more hospitals and institutions will be seeking to add these professionals to their teams.

Requirements to Become a Clinical Nurse Specialist

A Clinical Nurse Specialist must earn a Master's of Science in Nursing, with a specialization in clinical nursing.

Clinical Nurse Specialist Jobs

Employers include hospitals, clinics, private practices, and staffing agencies.

Show Me MSN Programs

8. Pain Management Nurse: Annual \$110,420 or \$47.41/hr*

Pain Management Nurses help manage a patient's pain post-surgery or work with patients who have chronic pain issues. They work within a healthcare team to help determine the cause of the pain and the proper course of treatment, while also educating patients about pain management and avoiding addiction or dependence on prescribed medication.

Pain Management Nurse Salary

The average yearly salary for pain management nurses is \$110,420 per year according to Indeed.com. Pain management nurses typically work 40 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$47.41.

Career Outlook for Pain Management Nurses

Because pain management nurses can work in a variety of healthcare settings -- hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation centers, and nursing homes -- the demand for this skill is strong. As the population continues to age, the need for experienced pain management nurses will only continue to rise.

Pain Management Nurse Requirements

While an advanced degree isn't necessary to become a pain management nurse, sufficient experience as an RN is required to vie for the Nurse Practitioner certification for Pain Management Specialists.

Pain Management Nurse Jobs

Employers include hospitals, drug counseling centers, drug dependency clinics, rehabilitation centers, oncology clinics, sports rehabilitation facilities, long-term care facilities, fitness centers, and staffing agencies.

Show Me MSN Programs

9. Registered Nurse First Assist: Annual \$101,890 or \$49.00/hr*

A Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA) is a perioperative registered nurse that functions as a first assistant during surgical operations. The role and responsibilities of an RNFA will vary greatly based on the institution. Large academic teaching hospitals might not employ as many RNFA due to residents and fellows.

Registered Nurse First Assist Salary

The average salary for a Registered Nurse First Assist is \$101,890, as of May 2022, according to Salary.com. But the range typically falls between \$92,181 and \$113,509. The salary range varies based on years of experience and location of the position. RNFAs typically work 36 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$49.00.

Career Outlook for Registered Nurse First Assists

With the overwhelming number of outpatient surgical centers opening across the country, the need for well trained Registered Nurse First Assistants is rapidly growing.

Requirements to Become a Registered Nurse First Assist

To become an RNFA, the nurse first must have substantial perioperative experience, as this advanced training builds upon the basic fundamentals and focuses on surgical anatomy, procedures, and techniques. To become a certified RNFA, the nurse must have a CNOR certification, active and unencumbered RN license, a bachelor's degree, as well as 2,000 hours of experience working as an RNFA.

Registered Nurse First Assist Jobs

RNFAs can work in ambulatory surgical centers, hospitals, outpatient same-day surgery centers, private offices, research, staffing agencies, and product development.

Show Me RN-to-BSN Programs

10. Nursing Administrator: Annual \$101,340 or \$48.72/hr*

A nurse administrator deals with the backstage operations of nursing, from budgeting and staff management to HR functions.

Nurse Administrator Salary

Nursing administrators earn a median salary of \$101,340 per year, as of May 2021, according to the BLS. Nurse administrators typically work a minimum of 40 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$48.72.

Career Outlook for Nurse Administrators

Employment of medical and health services managers (of which nursing administrators are a part of) is projected to grow 32% from 2020 to 2030, according to the BLS.

Requirements to Become a Nurse Administrator

Usually a Master's Degree in Healthcare Administration is required, as is state licensing. Some Nursing Administrators will also have a Masters in Business Administration.

Nurse Administrator Jobs

Employers include hospitals, private practice, healthcare companies, clinics, and staffing agencies.

Show Me Nursing Leadership Programs

11. Family Nurse Practitioner: Annual \$98,041 or \$51.20/hr*

The position of Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) is the career closest to functioning like a primary care physician. FNPs typically perform many of the same functions as an MD -- working in a medical office, hospital, clinic, or nursing facility. Their responsibilities include patient consultations, assessments, prescribing medications and treatment, and more.

Family nurse practitioners earn an average of \$98,041 per year, as of May 2022, according to Payscale.com. FNPs typically work 40 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$51.20.

Career Outlook for Family Nurse Practitioners

As stated above, nurse practitioner jobs are expected to grow 45 percent through 2029, according to the BLS. Those who focus on family practice will always be in demand since there are a variety of healthcare institutions where they can work. Fully autonomous practice is possible in almost half the states in the U.S., as well as within the Veterans Administration (VA) system.

Requirements to Become a Family Nurse Practitioner

FNPs must earn the Family Nurse Practitioner-Board Certified (FNP-BC) designation.

Family Nurse Practitioner Jobs

Employers include hospitals, clinics, freestanding ambulatory centers, urgent cares, and staffing agencies.

Show Me Family NP Programs

12. Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner: Annual \$90,391 or \$47.78/hr*

Older patients have a unique set of health issues requiring specialized care. RNs who prefer working with elderly patients should look no further than the adult-gerontology nurse practitioner career.

Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner Salary

Payscale.com reports the median annual salary for this specialty to be \$90,391 as of April 2022. Adult-Gerontology nurse practitioners typically work 40 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$47.78.

Career Outlook for Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioners

The aging population, longer life spans, and more access to long-term care options means there will be a greater need for nurses who specialize in caring for older patients. With a dramatic rise in the Baby Boomer population, there has become a sudden surge in the need for this specialty.

Requirements to Become an Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner

To practice this specialty, RNs must become Certified Gerontological Nurse Practitioners (CGNP) after obtaining their Master's degree in Nursing.

Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner Jobs

Employers include hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, urgent care, nursing homes, retirement communities, and staffing agencies.

Show Me Adult-Gerontology NP Programs

13. Nurse Educator: Annual \$82,040 or \$39.44/hr*

At some point, you may wish to transition from patient care to nurse education. If working directly with other nurses to train them or facilitate continuing education sounds appealing, becoming a nurse educator could be a good fit.

Nurse Educator Salary

Nurse educators can earn an average yearly salary of \$82,040, as reported by the BLS in 2021. Nurse educators typically work 40 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$39.44.

Career Outlook for Nurse Educators

There is a shortage of nurse educators (a trend that is expected to continue) making this a smart choice if you wish to get off the hospital floor and go to the head of the class. Currently, there are thousands of open nurse educator positions at the undergraduate and graduate levels that are waiting to be filled.

Requirements to Become a Nurse Educator

Nurse educators must hold a master's degree at minimum, although many do earn a doctoral degree as well. Nurse educators can also earn national certification in their field.

Nurse Educator Jobs

Employers include hospitals, private practices, hospital-based nursing programs, universities and colleges, healthcare companies, clinics, and staffing agencies.

Show Me Nurse Educator Programs

14. Informatics Nurse: Annual \$79,531 or \$34.94/hr*

Nursing, meet technology. This is one of the most in-demand nursing fields with unlimited growth thanks to the ongoing implementation of electronic medical records. According to the American Medical Informatics Association, nursing informatics integrates nursing with the management of information and communication technologies to promote public

health.

An Informatics Nurse has an average salary of \$79,531 according to Payscale.com. Informatics nurses typically work 40 hours per week, making their hourly wage approximately \$34.94.

Career Outlook for Informatics Nurses

The AMIA estimates that up to 70,000 nursing informatics specialists/analysts may be needed in the next five years.

Requirements to Become an Informatics Nurse

To get into nursing informatics, expect to earn a Master's of Science in Nursing, or a Master's in Information or Computer Science.

Informatics Nurse Jobs

Employers include hospitals, healthcare technology companies, medical record companies, clinics, and staffing agencies.

Show Me Nursing Informatics Programs

15. Health Policy Nurse: Annual \$79,429 or \$38.19 per hour*

If you are passionate about health and public policy, becoming a health policy nurse will let you take on the tasks of advocacy, research, analysis, policy development, implementation, and evaluation.

Health Policy Nurse Salary

ZipRecruiter.com states the average national salary for health policy nurses is \$79,429 as of June 2022. Nurses that work in this field often work as consultants, which makes the salary potential endless. Individuals will have the ability to work as much or as little as they wish. Health policy nurses typically work 40 hours per week, making their

average hourly wage approximately \$38.19, but this can vary widely.

Career Outlook for Health Policy Nurses

With so much attention on healthcare policy, there is no better time to take this career route.

Requirements to Become a Health Policy Nurse

After earning your MSN, you'll have to complete a 10-week health policy residency program in government offices, advocacy organizations, or community groups. Learn more about how specializing in Health Policy can advance your nursing career.

Health Policy Nurse Jobs

Employers include hospitals, occupational health, case management office, infection control, international health organizations, research, private practice, government offices, law practices, and staffing agencies.

Show Me Public Health Programs

BONUS! 5 More High Paying Nursing Careers

In case you didn't find what you were looking for in the list above, here are five more high paying nursing jobs to consider.

Surgical Nurse: Surgical Nurses are on the front lines of the nursing profession. Because so much is required of them, those who excel and decide to advance are considered to have entered a specialty area. According to Salary.com, the average annual surgical nurse salary is \$100,606. **Legal Nurse Consultant:** Legal nurse consultants work with different law professionals and perform a variety of different services for them. They will often assist in medical malpractice cases, toxic torts, insurance fraud cases, personal injury cases, worker's compensation cases, and criminal cases, among others. Legal nurse consultants have the ability to charge upwards of \$150 per hour. **Nurse Researcher:** Nurse Researchers are in charge of designing and implementing research studies, writing grants for federal and private

funding, observing patient treatments and procedures, collecting data, and reporting the data to the nursing community and public. Glassdoor lists an average salary of \$99,940 for nurse researchers. Strike Travel Nurse: Travel nursing is one of the hottest and most in-demand careers for nurses that want to explore the country, help save lives, and earn premium pay. The average salary for a strike nurse according to ZipRecruiter.com is \$106,866. However, strike nurses can earn over \$150,000. Per Diem Registered Nurse: Per diem nurses are Registered Nurses that work on an as-needed basis. These nurses are employees of a hospital or healthcare system and are paid a premium for working hard-to-staff shifts such as evenings, nights, and weekends. They may also be compensated for on-call pay and paid at a higher rate if they are called in to work. According to Payscale.com, per diem nurses can earn over \$60 an hour with some earning \$120/hr.

Not interested in nursing? Check out the 10 highest-paying healthcare jobs in 2021!

FAQs

Which nurses make the most money? The highest-paid nursing specialty is a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), averaging an annual salary of \$195,610. However, travel nurses of any specialty may be able to make close or more than that, depending on the specifics of their contracts.

Can a nurse be a millionaire? It is possible for a nurse to become a millionaire, but they would need to take on a high-level leadership position and/or other income streams, such as becoming an entrepreneur.

How can a nurse make \$100K? An RN can make \$100K in an advanced practitioner position, such as becoming a CRNA, NP, or CNM, becoming a nurse manager, travel nurse, or by taking on a second income stream.

What nurses are the happiest? Advanced practice nurses, including nurse midwives, clinical nurse specialists, and CRNAs, all report the highest levels of job satisfaction.

*Salary Disclaimer:

The salaries listed are highly generalized. Nurses can expect to see major variances based on geography, experience, and a number of other factors.

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When calculating hourly wages for nurse salaries, we used the following formula: For a nurse working 40 hours a week, we estimated 52 of those would be working weeks. 40 hours/week multiplied by 52 weeks/year = 2,080 hours per year. The hourly wage is equivalent to Annual Salary / 2,080 for a position with a 40-hour workweek. The same formula was applied for careers with a 36-hour workweek.

Reference

[A Simple Guide to IBM SPSS Statistics - version 23.0](#)

[Evaluating and Valuing in Social Research](#)