HWRI

Health Workforce Retraining Initiative

Participant's Guide

Professional Development Program

HWRI - Grant 8

January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020

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About the Programs

The New York State Department of Health (DOH), in consultation with the Department of Labor, awarded a 8th two-year grant to The Research Foundation for The State University of New York (RF) through the Professional Development Program (PDP) at Rockefeller College, University at Albany to resume operation of its Health Workforce Retraining Initiative (HWRI). Through this initiative PDP works with three partner agencies: Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Office of Mental Health (OMH), and Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) to help shape a nursing workforce best prepared to meet the needs of their respective populations, to bolster the numbers of staff available to fill nursing positions, to alleviate the shortage of nurses qualified to fill nurse leadership positions, and to improve the ability of agencies to recruit and retain experienced RN staff.

In collaboration with partner agencies, PDP awards a limited number of grant allocations in <u>each</u> year of the two-year grant cycle (January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2020) to eligible agency employees through four PDP HWRI Grant Programs. The programs offered during this grant cycle include: the new **Pre-/Post-Nursing Degree Study** and the **Workers Trained as RN** both available in all eight of DOH's regions across NYS, the **RNs Trained as BSN/MSN** available only in the Long Island region for this cycle, and the **Nurses Pursuing Advanced Degrees/Certifications** programs available in all DOH regions except Central.

> The new **Pre-/Post-Nursing Degree Study** program supports the growth of a nursing workforce one college course at a time. The pre-nursing degree component is designed for non-nursing employees who categorize themselves as non-traditional college students to prepare to pursue a nursing degree and RN licensure through completion of remedial, ESL or prerequisite coursework prior to enrolling in a degree program. The post-nursing degree component will enable employees who are already agency nurses to improve and expand their skills or to develop specialty knowledge geared toward the specific needs of the agency population.

> The **Workers Trained as RN** program is designed for workers currently employed by partner agencies at facilities throughout each region who are interested in pursuing registered nurse licensure by enrolling in and completing college, credit-bearing coursework to satisfy accredited nursing programs at the Associates or Bachelor's level.

> The **RNs Trained as BSN/MSN** program is designed for registered nurses currently employed by partner agencies at facilities throughout each region who are interested in furthering their education by pursuing a Bachelor or Master of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN/MSN).

> The new **Nurses Pursuing Advanced Degrees/Certifications** program is designed for registered nurses currently employed at facilities throughout the region to expand or customize their nursing credentials to align with agency areas of need by pursuing an advanced nursing certificate or degree such as those offered through nursing Master's or Doctoral programs.

Employees at partner agencies who meet the eligibility criteria may apply for an allocation. Partner agencies will help interested employees determine if they meet the eligibility requirements and complete the application process. Contact information for your agency representative is on page 13 of this guide.

Allocations are available in each year of the two-year grant cycle. Employees who apply for and are selected to receive an allocation in year one may apply the grant toward eligible expenses incurred from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019. Employees who apply for and are selected to receive an

allocation in year two may apply the grant toward eligible expenses incurred from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

Grant funds are intended to offset recipients' out-of-pocket costs after all other sources of financial aid grants and scholarships are deducted from covered education expenses. **Because funds are limited, the amount of money available to each person may not cover all education costs**, especially if a student is taking multiple courses in a semester, attending a private college or pursuing an advanced degree.

Eligibility/Program Requirements

You are eligible to apply for a grant through one of PDP's four HWRI Grant Programs if you meet the following program criteria:

⇒ You are employed by OMH, OPWDD or DOCCS in a region where grant funding is available during the current grant cycle.

⇒ If not currently an RN, you demonstrate interest in becoming a nurse.

⇒ You are an employee in good standing as reflected by positive performance evaluation record and consistently satisfactory time and attendance record.

⇒ You are considered by facility personnel to be highly motivated with an inclination for successful completion of required coursework.

⇒ You have a letter of recommendation from a supervisor.

⇒ You meet any additional requirements provided by your agency.

In addition -

⇒ **Workers Trained RN program** ONLY
   o You meet admissions/testing requirements of an accredited nursing program that supports eligibility to take the NCLEX-RN
   o You are either matriculated in an accredited RN nursing program that supports eligibility for the NCLEX-RN exam or interested in entering such a program (HWRI funds can be used for participation in prerequisite courses that will help you to succeed once you enter a nursing program)
   o You maintain a grade point average of at least 2.0 if currently matriculated

⇒ **RNs Trained as BSN/MSN program** ONLY
   o You are currently licensed as a registered professional nurse in NY State
   o You maintain a grade point average of at least 2.5 if currently matriculated
   o You meet admissions/testing requirements of a BSN or MSN accredited program

⇒ **Nurses Pursuing Advanced Degrees/Certifications program** ONLY
   o You are currently licensed as a registered professional nurse in NY State
   o You maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 if currently matriculated
   o You meet admissions/testing requirements of the certificate or advanced accredited nursing program

⇒ **Pre-Nursing component of the Pre-/Post-Nursing Degree Study program** ONLY
   o No additional criteria for this component of the **Pre-/Post-Nursing Degree Study** program

⇒ **Post-Nursing component of the Pre-/Post-Nursing Degree Study program** ONLY
   o You are currently licensed as a registered professional nurse in NY State
   o You demonstrate interest in work activities related to an agency identified area of need

❖ Please consult with your mentor or agency representative about any additional criteria your agency may require.

Application Process

1. Contact your agency rep or mentor to let them know you are interested in applying for a grant from any of the four PDP HWRI Grant Programs.

2. Ask your agency rep or mentor if allocations (grants) are available for that program in your region.

3. Ask your agency rep or mentor about your agency's internal process, which may include an interview. If your agency has available allocations for grants, work with your agency rep or mentor to determine if you meet all eligibility criteria. If your agency has no available allocations at the time they may place your name on a wait list.

4. If you are selected as an eligible applicant, your agency will work with you to help you finalize and submit your *HWRI Grant Application* to PDP. Please remember to provide all information requested, sign the form and obtain the other required signatures.

5. Once PDP receives your application it will confirm or deny assignment of a grant allocation with your agency based on availability of funds and eligibility. Your agency will then inform you if you were selected to receive an allocation (grant) and assist you with next steps.

6. Once PDP has confirmed with your agency that you are entitled to an allocation you can plan on submitting PDP's *HWRI Nursing Grant Request Forms* to use your grant allocation toward eligible expenses that are incurred any time during the program year under which you are applying, year 1 or year 2.

   Please note -

   Allocations are limited so only a specific number of applicants will be selected to participate from each agency each year.

   Since allocations are available in each year (Year 1: January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 and Year 2: January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019) of the two-year grant cycle, participants from year 1 who would like to receive a grant in year 2 will need to reapply for year 2 by submitting an updated *HWRI Grant Application.*

   Since HWRI funds can be used for application costs and for participation in courses that will help you to succeed once you enter a nursing program, **you do not have to be registered in a nursing program in order to apply.**

   You can obtain forms from your facility's educational mentor or at the Professional Development Program, HWRI Grant Program website: https://www.pdp.albany.edu/HWRI/default.cfm

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Responsibilities of Program Participants

If you receive an allocation and become a HWRI Grant Program participant please:

- Enroll in and complete appropriate coursework based on your HWRI program requirements.
- Meet with your assigned educational mentor at least twice during the term of study to discuss your educational goals and progress.
- If you are having difficulty with your classes, work with your mentor to come up with possible solutions. In certain situations, tutoring services can be paid using HWRI funds.
- Notify your mentor right away if you decide you will not use any portion of your grant, leave employment with your agency, or withdraw from a class or choose to discontinue your education so any unused funds can be given to someone else.
- Apply for financial aid grants, such as TAP and PELL, through your college or university's student accounts office. If you are part of a union such as CSEA or PEF, research your education benefits and apply for tuition aid if it is available.
- Complete the Nursing Grant Request Form (NRGF) to use your grant in a timely manner. You do not have to wait until you have completed your coursework to submit a NGRF. **PDP's HWRI Grant Program pays educational institutions directly for tuition so it is easier and preferable for you to request a tuition voucher from us before you pay your tuition and fees using the process outlined on the Tuition Support page of this guide. You can submit a request to use your grant for this expense if you have already paid the tuition bill however PDP will still pay the educational institution directly.**
- Complete NGRFs and other forms accurately and include all necessary supporting documentation.
- Be sure PDP receives a copy of your course grades for any courses paid with HWRI grant funds after completion of courses.
- Provide information on any changes in your student status including graduation or withdrawal date, RN licensure attainment, and changes in job status including: remains in current job, applied for new position at same facility, applied for new position within agency, attained new position within agency at same or higher salary.

You are responsible for ensuring requests to use your grant are submitted to PDP by the funding deadlines noted in this guide (page 11) and on the current *HWRI Nursing Grant Request Form*. Requests received after the deadline cannot be processed and unused funds cannot be claimed after the calendar year has ended.

Covered Expenses

HWRI grant funds can be used to offset the costs for education-related expenses including tuition, fees, books, and supplies.

IS THIS EXPENSE COVERED UNDER THE HWRI GRANT?		
YES if funds are available, expense can be covered with proof of payment	**MAYBE** expense may be covered (CALL HWRI Grant Program prior to purchase to discuss)	**NO** expense IS NOT covered
Tuition/ College fees/ Application fees*	Tutoring services	Late fees/ Payment plan fees
Mandatory parking fee		Transportation costs including parking fees for clinical assignments
Required Textbooks	Required computer software program for specific course	Computer software packages for general use (ex. MS Office suite)
NCLEX-RN review class/review books/exam fee		RN license fee
Basic school supplies		Computer/ Handheld computer/ PDA/ Smart phone
Required Uniforms (pants/shirts/shoes)		Outerwear
Required Penlight/ Stethoscope/ BP cuff/ Name badge		Backpack/ Suitcase
Student malpractice insurance		Organization membership fees

If you have an educational expense and want to know if it can be reimbursed using HWRI funds, call us at 518-442-6633 or 518-442-6605, or email hwri@albany.edu.

Using Your Grant Allocation

To request use of the funds from your grant allocation, please complete an *HWRI Nursing Grant Request Form* (NGRF) to request tuition support (explained in detail on pages 8 and 9 of this guide) or reimbursement for eligible, out-of-pocket expenses (explained in detail on page 10 of this guide). Work with your mentor and agency rep to submit the completed NGRF, along with **required supporting documentation** and **signatures** as described on the form and elsewhere in this guide, to the Professional Development Program, HWRI Grant Program at the address listed on the bottom of the first page of the form. Alternatively, we will accept scanned and emailed paperwork to expedite the process.

You can obtain forms from your facility's educational mentor or at the Professional Development Program, HWRI Grant Program website: https://www.pdp.albany.edu/HWRI/default.cfm

Please note -

You do not have to wait until you have completed a course to submit a NGRF to use your grant allocation. You may request use of your grant toward tuition and fees once **you** **have** **an** **itemized** **tuition** **bill** **from** **your** **college.**

Help Support Additional Participants

If you do not need to request use of the full amount of your allocation, please check the box in ***Section 7*** of the NGRF. The PDP HWRI Grant Program may be able to use the remaining funds from your allocation to provide a grant for another eligible agency employee who did not receive a grant allocation and who was placed on a wait list.

Tuition Support

When you request tuition assistance by completing and submitting a *HWRI Nursing Grant Request Form* (NGRF), the HWRI Grant Program will give you a *HWRI Grant Award Notification Voucher* (see sample voucher on page 9) that you will bring to your school to use toward payment of tuition and fees. The school then validates and returns the voucher to the PDP HWRI Grant Program for payment of any remaining charges (up to the maximum amount listed on the award voucher) that you would incur after all other financial aid grants and scholarships, such as PELL and CSEA Partnership vouchers, have been applied.

Tuition costs can only be paid to educational institutions and cannot be paid directly to you. For this reason, we recommend that you make every attempt to get a tuition award voucher prior to the date your tuition is due. If you have already paid your tuition costs, you will still need to request an award voucher and give it to your school by following the process outlined in the section below, **To get an award voucher:**. Once the school has been reimbursed by PDP, you can request a credit or rebate from the school for any balance on your account.

Exception: If you paid an application or an enrollment fee, you can request a rebate from PDP (page 10 of this guide on how to request a rebate) with an itemized receipt showing proof of payment.

To get an award voucher:
- Register for your classes and get an itemized tuition bill. *If your college requires payment at the time of registration, see alternate instructions below.
- Verify the itemized tuition bill has all necessary details.
  - Name
  - Student ID number
  - Semester or dates of study
  - Course code and name(s)   (If your tuition bill does not list the courses you will be taking, you need to include a course schedule with your request.)
  - Cost of each course or cost per credit hour
- **Complete sections 1 through 5 of an *HWRI Nursing Grant Request Form***. If you are getting other tuition support such as from CSEA or PEF, indicate the amount in section 5 of the request form (NGRF) in the box designated as *Total anticipated grant from other source…*
- Sign and date the form and have your educational mentor sign and date the form.
- Have your agency representative (OMH, OPWDD or DOCCS) sign and date the completed form and send it along with the tuition bill to the Professional Development Program, HWRI Grant Program.
- PDP will verify the information and generate an award voucher.
- PDP will scan and email the award voucher to your agency representative who will send it to you for you to take to the college bursar.

Please allow up to two weeks after you have submitted your request to receive your voucher. If you need this process expedited, please call us at (518) 442-6633 to discuss.

*If you cannot supply a tuition bill because your college requires payment at the time of registration (e.g., Excelsior College), you need to get a letter from your advisor listing the courses you plan to take and a summary of the expenses that will be due. Submit this letter in lieu of the tuition bill. When you receive your award voucher, contact your advisor so you can register for your classes/exams and use your signed award voucher for payment at the time of registration.

To use an award voucher:

Your *HWRI Grant Award Notification Voucher* will list the maximum value of the voucher in the upper right hand corner of the form in the field labeled **Award Amount (UP TO:)** (See red arrow below.) The amount shown will never exceed the value of an allocation for the current grant cycle. In some cases this amount reflects only a portion of your allocation due to other reimbursement requests you may have submitted. **You are responsible for any account balance at your school.**

When you receive a tuition voucher, you need to:

- Verify all voucher information is correct (your name, address, course name(s), dates and school)
- Sign the voucher.
- Bring the voucher to the bursar or student account's office as payment.
- The school will verify the charges and write in the billed amount, sign the voucher and send it to the Professional Development Program, HWRI Grant Program at the address on the bottom of the voucher, or scan and email it to HWRI@albany.edu.
- PDP's HWRI grant program will authorize payment and send a check directly to the school for payment of that portion of your tuition.

If you paid your tuition prior to receiving the award voucher, the process is still the same. You need to request a voucher and then submit the signed voucher to the school. Payment will be made to the school. Once the school has received payment from the HWRI Grant Program, your account will show a positive balance and the school will refund the excess funds to you upon request.

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Books and Supply Reimbursement

You can request a rebate (reimbursement) for money spent on books, school supplies, uniforms and clinical supplies that are required for class. You must have an **itemized receipt** that includes:

- A purchase date that falls within the allocation period
    - For year 1 : 1/1/2019 – 12/31/2019
    - For year 2 : 1/1/2020 – 12/31/2020
- Name of the item(s)
- Cost of each item(s)
- Proof that you paid for the item(s)

To request a rebate:

- **Complete sections 1 through 4 and section 6 of** a *HWRI Nursing Grant Request Form*
- Include a completed IRS W-9 form
- Sign and date the form
- Attach all itemized receipts
- Have your educational mentor sign and date the form
- Have your OMH, OPWDD or DOCCS agency representative sign, date and send the completed form to the PDP HWRI Grant Program for processing

A PDP HWRI Grant Program representative will verify that the purchase(s) is eligible for reimbursement. If you have funds available from your current allocation, the HWRI Program will arrange to have a rebate check sent to you. The check will be sent to the address listed on the W-9 form.

Checks typically take 4-6 weeks to be processed. If you have not received payment on a rebate request that was sent to HWRI after more than six weeks, call us at 518-442-6633.

You can obtain forms from your facility's educational mentor or at the Professional Development Program, HWRI Grant Program website: https://www.pdp.albany.edu/HWRI/default.cfm

IRS Form W-9

For the program to issue you a reimbursement check, we must have your completed W-9 form on file.

Please complete the W-9 as follows:

- **Name**: Fill out the name line only with your legal name. This is how reimbursement checks will be printed.
- **Check appropriate box**: Mark Individual/Sole proprietor or single-member LLC.
- **Address, City, State and Zip Code**: Print your current mailing address. This is where checks will be sent.
- **Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN):** Fill in your social security number.
- **Sign Here:** Provide your original signature and date the form. Your payments cannot be processed without an original signature.

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Important Dates for Submitting *HWRI Nursing Grant Request Forms*

For tuition and rebate reimbursement requests submitted to the Professional Development Program, HWRI Grant Program through submission of *HWRI Nursing Grant Request Forms*:

For Participants Receiving an Allocation in Year 1

Year 1: 1/1/2019 through 12/31/2019

All activities that occur during the time frame January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 apply to year 1 of the grant cycle. Requests for rebates paid directly to participants for approved expense reimbursements related to activities during this time frame should always be sent to PDP **immediately when they occur** but not later than 12/1/2019. Requests for tuition vouchers to use to pay schools directly for approved portion of tuition related to approved courses during this time frame should always be sent to PDP **prior to due date for tuition payment** but not later than 12/1/2019. Requests received after this deadline may not be covered.

Requests received after 12/31/2019 for activity in year 1 will not be covered.

For Participants Receiving an Allocation in Year 2

Year 2: 1/1/2020 through 12/31/2020

All activities that occur during the time frame January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 apply to year 2 of the grant cycle. Requests for rebates paid directly to participants for approved expense reimbursements related to activities during this time frame should always be sent to PDP **immediately when they occur** but not later than 12/1/2020. Requests for tuition vouchers to use to pay schools directly for approved portion of tuition related to approved courses during this time frame should always be sent to PDP **prior to due date for tuition payment** but not later than 12/1/2020. Requests received after this deadline may not be covered.

Requests received after 12/31/2020 for activity in year 2 will not be covered.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I get funding to take an online course?

A: HWRI Grant Program funds can be used for online courses. If the college offers an accredited RN degree program and the course is required, HWRI funds can be used. In addition, some online courses that prepare you to enter an RN program and some courses that are transferrable to an accredited program may be covered. Call the HWRI Program at (518) 442-6605 **prior to registration** so we can tell you if the specific course you are interested in taking would qualify.

Q: I already paid my tuition and would like HWRI to reimburse me directly instead of paying my school. Is this possible?

A: No, tuition payments can only be made to educational institutions. Once an HWRI payment has been made to the school, you can ask the school to refund any balance to you.

Q: Do I have to wait until I complete a class to submit my Nursing Grant Request Form?

A: NO. You should submit your Nursing Grant Request Form as soon as you have your course schedule and tuition bill. While grades are required, these may be submitted at a later date.

Q: I plan to take the nursing boards (NCLEX-RN) soon and would like to take a review class. Is the cost of the class covered by the grant?

A: Yes, NCLEX-RN review courses are covered as long as you have remaining funds from your allocation. If the company will accept a voucher, follow the process in the Tuition Support section of this guide to get a voucher. If the company requests payment upon registration, complete a rebate request and include an itemized receipt showing payment.

Q: Is the cost of the NCLEX-RN exam covered by the grant?

A: Yes, the cost of the exam is covered as long as you have remaining funds from your allocation. Complete and submit a HWRI Nursing Grant Request Form with an itemized receipt showing payment.

Q: I passed the NCLEX-RN exam. Will the grant pay for my NYS license to practice as a registered nurse?

A: No, licensure costs are not covered. However, this cost may be covered under educational benefits offered by your union.

Contact Information

PDP
HWRI Grant Program

- **Professional Development Program**
- **Penny LaRocque - Phone** (518) 442-6605
- **Terri Zuelsdorf - Phone** (518) 442-6633
- **Email:** HWRI@albany.edu
- **Fax:** (518) 442-6649
- **Website for forms:**
  https://www.pdp.albany.edu/HWRI/default.cfm

OMH
Agency Level HWRI Assistance

- **Juanita Goyette**
- **OMH/Office of Coordinated Nursing Services**
- **44 Holland Avenue-8th Floor, Albany, NY 12229**
- **Phone:** (518) 474-8501
- **Fax:** (518) 474-6909
- **Email:** juanita.goyette@omh.ny.gov
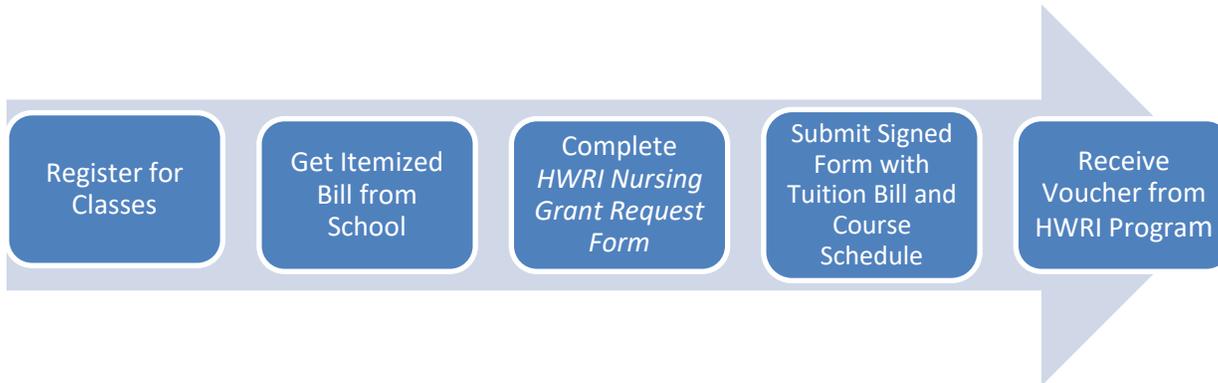
OPWDD
Agency Level HWRI Assistance

- **Susan Gottfried**
- **Talent Development and Training**
- **NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities**
- **44 Holland Avenue, Albany, NY 12229**
- **Phone:** (518) 473-1190
- **Email:** talentdevelopment@opwdd.ny.gov

DOCCS
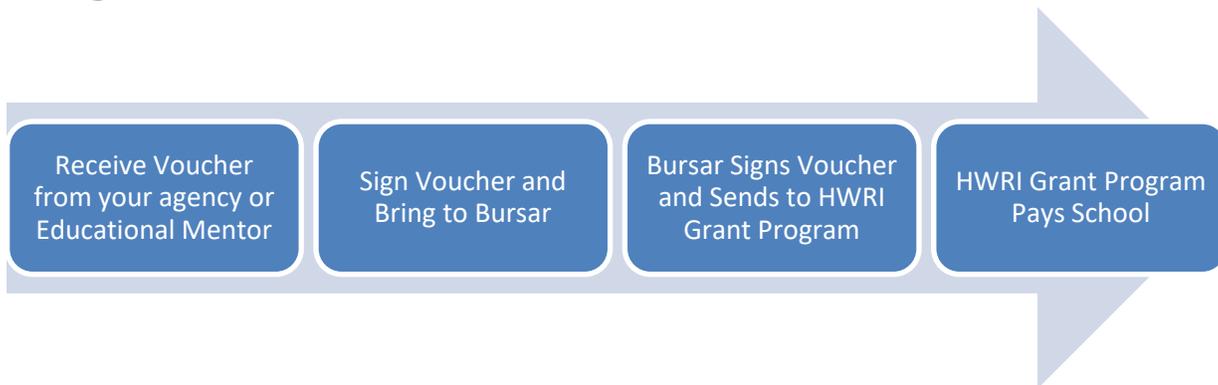**Agency Level HWRI Assistance**

- **Tracy Boswell, RN, BSN**
- **Department of Corrections and Community Supervision - Medical Unit**
- **PO Box 2000**
- **1156 Route 374, Dannemora, NY 12929**
- **Phone** (518) 492-2511 ext. 6111
- **Email:** Tracy.Boswell@doccs.ny.gov

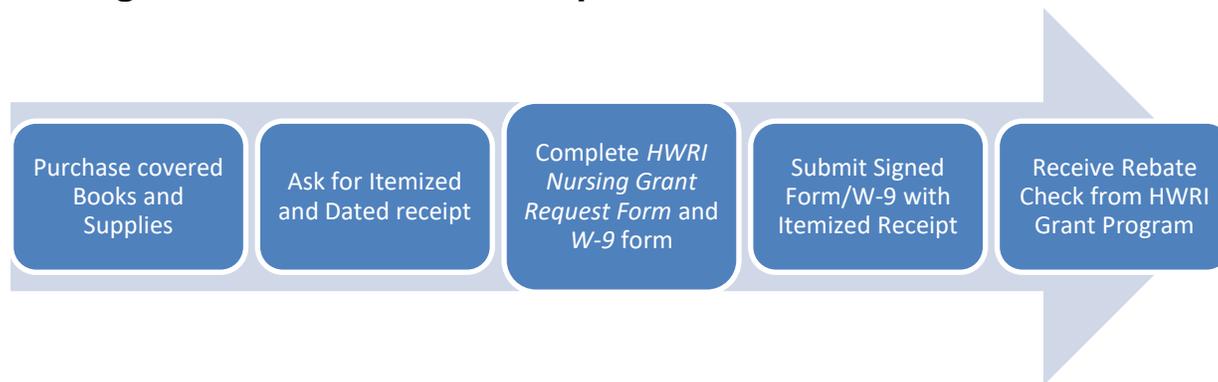# Quick Reference Guide for Using Your Grant Allocation

Getting a *HWRI Grant Award Notification Voucher* for Paying Tuition

Register for Classes → Get Itemized Bill from School → Complete *HWRI Nursing Grant Request Form* → Submit Signed Form with Tuition Bill and Course Schedule → Receive Voucher from HWRI Program

Using a *HWRI Grant Award Notification Voucher*

Receive Voucher from your agency or Educational Mentor → Sign Voucher and Bring to Bursar → Bursar Signs Voucher and Sends to HWRI Grant Program → HWRI Grant Program Pays School

Getting a Rebate for Covered Expense Reimbursement

Purchase covered Books and Supplies → Ask for Itemized and Dated receipt → Complete *HWRI Nursing Grant Request Form* and *W-9* form → Submit Signed Form/W-9 with Itemized Receipt → Receive Rebate Check from HWRI Grant Program

You can obtain forms from your facility's educational mentor or at the Professional Development Program, HWRI Grant Program website: https://www.pdp.albany.edu/HWRI/default.cfm

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