

Center for Health Care Quality
Virtual Job Fair for
Nurse Surveyors/Health Facilities Evaluator Nurses
December 12, 2017

Frequently Asked Questions

Human Resources

1. I am interested in working for CHCQ as a Nurse Surveyor; however, I had some technical issues taking the online examination/assessment. I also mailed a paper application but I never received a response. What should I do?
 - a. If you are having technical issues, or want to confirm submission of your application, please reach out to us! Our contact information is listed in the slide presentation and at the end of this document as well as on the CDPHnurse.org website through which you registered. You may also contact our Human Resources Recruitment staff at Apply@CDPH.ca.gov
2. Are pension benefits or employee 401ks offered?
 - a. The State of California offers generous pension and 401k programs. Please visit the California Department of Human Resources ([CalHR](#)) website for more information and select Salary and Benefit or Savings Plus 401(k) and 457(b) under Popular Links.
3. Is citizenship required for this job? Are permanent residents eligible? Are there any additional processes?
 - a. U.S. citizenship is not necessarily required; however, you must provide proof of your eligibility to work in the United States. Your eligibility to work is verified through the I-9 process which will be provided no later than your 1st day of employment. I-9 is a Federal requirement that outlines a list of acceptable employment verification documents required to work in the United States. ([I-9](#)). Additional processes may be required depending on your citizenship status (i.e. obtaining H1B work visa).
4. What impacts the salary range that you qualify for? Is it negotiable?
 - a. Typically, agencies appoint employees to the minimum rate of the salary range for the classification. There is an ability to negotiate a competitive salary above the minimum salary range of a classification for persons with extraordinary qualifications. We encourage you to apply and address salary questions with the hiring manager.
5. Are you hiring for part-time or full-time positions?
 - a. All District Offices are hiring full-time positions regularly. Part-time positions are not regularly offered but may be posted on www.jobs.ca.gov if and when they are made available.
6. Can you explain the salary scale and how one would be hired in at the top of the range?
 - a. All civil service classifications have salary ranges with minimum and maximum rates.

- b. Typically, agencies appoint employees to the minimum rate of the salary range for the class.
 - c. Positions in the following counties start at \$6816/mo.: San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Sonoma. All other counties start at \$5893/mo.
 - d. There is an ability to negotiate a competitive salary above the minimum salary range of a classification for persons with extraordinary qualifications.
 - e. After each 12 months of satisfactory performance, employees are eligible to receive a 5 percent merit salary adjustment (MSA) until they reach the maximum salary for the classification in which they are appointed.
 - f. Based on statewide union negotiations, both union represented and non-represented employees may be eligible for general salary increases in addition to the MSA.
7. For how long will the state pay the retention bonus? Will this amount ever increase?
- a. The retention pay has been in place since 1984, and has no expiration date. We do not anticipate any changes, including increases or decreases to the amount. Any changes are at the discretion of CalHR.
8. What are the CalPers retirement benefits for this position? Can they be added to current CalPers qualifying years?
- a. Effective July 1, 2013, under the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) retirement benefits are First Tier which is 2% @ at age 62, also at the time of hire employees will be required to complete CalPERS self-certification application to identify their reciprocal agency.
9. How many years of service are required to become vested for retirement?
- a. There are two requirements to be vested one is the five (5) years of state service and the other is the age requirement. More information can be found at [CalPERS](#).
10. What insurance company is used? Is it a HMO or PPO?
- a. [CalPERS](#) has a wide variety of plans that include HMOs and PPOs.
11. Do you have to contribute to CALPERS if you have retired?
- a. Yes if you accept a permanent appointment, you are required to contribute.
12. Can one work part time and still receive full benefits?
- a. There are some circumstances where you can qualify for full benefits as a part-time employee. Please consult with your hiring manager if you are interviewing for a part-time position. If you have a permanent appointment or a limited term appointment with a duration of more than six months and work at least half time you are eligible for full health benefits. Service credits and leave accruals are in accordance with the time base the employee works.
13. Does CDPH offer tuition reimbursement?
- a. There are reimbursement opportunities for additional training, but not for tuition.
14. Are there many team building activities or company events (i.e. fundraisers, holiday parties)?
- a. There are team building activities such as picnics and holiday parties.

Qualifications

1. What are the minimum qualifications?
 - a. Applicants must possess a valid California Registered Nurse license and one year of professional nursing experience, including a minimum of six months of administrative responsibility.
2. Is a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) required?
 - a. No, a BSN is not required. The required administrative experience may be substituted with a BSN.
3. Is a master's degree required to apply for this position?
 - a. No, a master's degree is not required. The required one year of general experience may be substituted with a master's degree in a recognized health field such as microbiology, laboratory technology, nursing, physical therapy, psychology, medical social work, or other health related field from a recognized school.
4. What is "Administrative Experience"?
 - a. Most applicants gain administrative experience in the following roles: Director of Nursing, Supervisor of a wing or floor of a hospital, Charge Nurse, Head Nurse, Shift Supervisor, Nursing home Administrator, Director of staff development in a skilled nursing facility or intermediate care facility, or teaching experience in nursing education. There are other ways to gain administrative experience. You are encouraged to apply and document all your experience and education on your application for evaluation.
5. If my RN license is in a probationary status, am I still eligible?
 - a. Yes, as long as the probationary status does not prevent you from practicing nursing in California.
6. If a candidate has experience in utilization review (UR) but not in management, are they still eligible to apply?
 - a. Yes, the candidate may be eligible. A candidate's eligibility is determined by an evaluation of all the candidate's experience and education. All candidates are encouraged to apply and document all the experience and education.
7. Is it required to have a public health nurse certification?
 - a. No, a public health nurse certification is not required.
8. Can you work part-time as a surveyor and still work in a hospital setting?
 - a. It depends. A conflict of interest arises if a CDPH surveyor works in a hospital or facility licensed and certified by CDPH. There are hospitals and facilities not licensed or certified by CDPH (i.e. hospitals and facilities under federal and state Veterans Affairs departments). We encourage you reach out to us if you have specific concerns on this subject.

Application Process

9. How and where do I apply?
 - a. Our website, www.CDPHnurse.org outlines all of the steps for the application process and connects you directly to the application.
10. Can you explain the difference between an examination/assessment and applying for a job?

- a. An examination/assessment evaluates an applicant's knowledge, skills and abilities to determine success potential in the classification. When you apply for a job, you are notifying the hiring manager of your interest in being considered for a specific position.
 - b. Before you can work for the state, you need to establish eligibility. Typically, this is done by taking and passing an examination/assessment for the classification that you wish to be considered for employment. The examination/assessment for the Nurse Surveyor consists of a series of questions found online under the classification title of Health Facilities Nurse Evaluator. After you complete the examination, you may apply for Nurse Surveyor vacancies. Please note: Vacant positions are posted regularly by county and have final filling dates. If you wish to be considered for more than one county, you must apply for a position in each county you are interested in working in.
11. How do I take the examination/assessment to work at the Center for Health Care Quality (CHCQ) as a Health Facilities Evaluator Nurse (HFEN)?
 - a. The examination/assessment is proctored online through the jobs.ca.gov website. You can also visit www.CDPHnurse.org for step-by-step directions and a direct link to the Health Facilities Evaluator Nurse examination/assessment. If you have any questions about a specific examination/assessment, please contact us at apply@cdph.ca.gov or call (916) 322-9905.
12. Does a gap in work history affect the hiring process?
 - a. No, it will not affect the evaluation of the minimum qualifications of the application. It may be discussed in the interview but is not a unique disqualifier.
13. If nursing is my second career, should I list previous non-nursing work experience?
 - a. Your work experience is initially reviewed to ensure you meet the minimum qualifications noted above. Additional work experience may be beneficial for the hiring manager to determine your knowledge, skills, and abilities required and desired in candidates.
14. Can the examination/assessment be taken multiple times? E.g. If someone scores low, or does not pass, can they retake it in the interest of scoring higher?
 - a. The Health Facilities Evaluator Nurse examination/assessment can be taken once every 12 months.
15. If I have already applied and have not heard anything back, can I obtain feedback on why I was not considered for the position?
 - a. If you have questions regarding the status of your application you can contact the Personnel Liaison Unit at (916) 322-9905.
16. I am still active as a previous state employee. Do I need to take the exam before applying as a state surveyor?
 - a. Candidates may have eligibility to be appointed as a Health Facilities Evaluator Nurse, depending on prior classification held, through reinstatement rights or lateral transfer if they have current or prior State service, based on transfer and reinstatement laws/rules. If your previous classification was as a Health Facilities Evaluator Nurse (Nurse Surveyor), you will not need to take the examination. Further questions can be directed to Apply@cdph.ca.gov

17. How can I apply to multiple regions?
 - a. Nurse surveyor's vacancies are posted regularly by county and have final filling dates. If you wish to be considered for more than one county, you must apply to a job posting for each county you want to work in.
18. How difficult is it to actually get a position as a nurse surveyor?
 - a. There is a straightforward three-part process to obtain a nurse surveyor position.
 - i. Create a CalCareers account on www.jobs.ca.gov, and take and pass the online examination/assessment for the Health Facilities Evaluator Nurse classification.
 - ii. Identify and apply for nurse surveyor jobs in the counties that you want to work in.
 - iii. Interview for jobs.
19. I am already on the eligibility list and submitted my application. What happens next?
How long should I wait to hear from someone?
 - a. Supervisors will screen all applicants after the final filing date posted on the job posting, and will contact the most qualified candidates for interview. You should generally be contacted within a week of the job postings' final filling date. This may be in the form of a confirmation email, or a request for additional information/documentation.
20. Is there a deadline for submitting my application?
 - a. While we continuously accept applications for this position, please note that applications are reviewed after the final filing date of each job posting. We highly encourage you to submit your application as soon as possible to be added to the current posting's candidate list.

Training Process and Performance Measurement

1. Please describe the training process. How long is the training to be a State Surveyor?
What amount of on the job training will be provided?
 - a. For new Nurse Surveyors training focuses primarily on skilled nursing facilities as that is a significant portion of the work conducted. There is a total of five weeks of training provided in one week intervals, followed by federal training online and the surveyor minimum qualifications test (SMQT). This process typically lasts up to nine months and additional specialty training is provided as needed. – five weeks total training, one week at a time, federal training online as well a
2. How is employee success measured? What types of mentorship programs are provided?
 - a. Employees have training supervisors in the District Offices and are mentored closely. If there are identified weaknesses they are made aware of it and given opportunities to improve. There are other classes offered as well for particular skills or weaknesses. Employees also have an individual development plan (IDP) that is developed every year.
3. What type of employee tends to succeed here? What experience are you looking for?

- a. Employees with keen analytical, problem solving, and investigative skills tend to most often succeed – someone who likes the challenge and is passionate for patient advocacy with the ability to adapt quickly to change.
- 4. How useful or necessary is direct patient care experience?
 - a. Direct patient care experience is useful but not necessary, as that experience helps you evaluate the care patients are receiving.
- 5. How long is the probationary period?
 - a. The probationary period for Nurse Surveyors is 12 months.

Role of a HFEN

- 1. Why is CDPH recruiting so heavily for Nurse Surveyors?
 - a. The Center for Healthcare Quality received additional authorized Nurse Surveyor positions. This allows the department to hire more Surveyors and continue to conduct this important work. Our Nurse Surveyors comprise approximately 1/3 of our staff at CDPH.
- 2. Do you travel a lot within an assigned county or throughout the state? Is there an overnight travel requirement?
 - a. This depends on the District Office in question; most District Offices have multiple counties within their jurisdiction and others have only one county or a few small but densely populated counties in their jurisdiction. No District Office is responsible for work through the entire state.
- 3. How many Nurse Surveyors are needed in each county?
 - a. Nurse Surveyors/HFENs are assigned by District Office rather by county and each office varies in the number of HFENs assigned from 24-60.
- 4. Can a Nurse Surveyor work out of two district offices?
 - a. Surveyors are generally based out of one district office. Occasionally, District Offices will assist each other based on workload.
- 5. How many agencies or facilities do you see in a day?
 - a. Depending on the survey being done, Surveyors will generally see no more than one facility per day. Sometimes surveys take more than one day to complete at larger facilities.
- 6. Do we have a choice in our survey assignments? If you are interested in a particular area such as complaints, how can that be accommodated?
 - a. When possible, we try to assign surveys based on your proximity to the site from home or the office, areas of interest, and special expertise.
- 7. What is the usual mix of field vs. office work in terms of hours/days per week?
 - a. Typically Nurse Surveyors work equally in the field and office, as surveys usually take 2-3 days in the field with two days to write a report and complaint investigations typically take about a day with report writing after that as well.
- 8. How does surveyor work differ from the work done at the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO)?
 - a. The JCAHO is a non-profit organization that provides voluntary accreditation and certification to health-care facilities across the United States, while the California Department of Public Health is responsible for all health-care facilities in

California that are licensed by the state, and Nurse Surveyors act with the authority of the State of California to ensure patient safety and quality of care.

9. Is it typical to work with a team or independently?
 - a. HFENs will work both in teams and independently. Typically, HFENs will work independently on surveys, and in teams for complaint investigations.
10. What are the telecommuting options?
 - a. Telecommuting options may be made available for employees who have passed their year-long probation period.
11. Do we drive our own car and use our own gas?
 - a. State vehicles are available to use. Depending on the location of the survey in proximity to your home/office, you may occasionally prefer to drive your own vehicle. In that case, mileage is reimbursable.
12. Does travel time count as work time as well?
 - a. Generally speaking, travel time is considered paid work time. Normal commute to and from work is not considered work time and is not paid.
13. Are there safety risks associated with working as a Nurse Surveyor?
 - a. Nurse Surveyors do not come into direct contact with patients so there is very little concern with infection control or lifting/assisting patients.
14. How long do employees generally stay in the Nurse Surveyor Role?
 - a. Generally at least 2 years.