

# Health Career Access Program: Home Support/Community Care - FAQs

## What is the Health Career Access Program (HCAP)?

The Health Careers Access Program (HCAP) is designed to increase the Health Care Assistant workforce in BC. The HCAP program includes education, training and work experiences. HCAP is employer-sponsored training leading to a provincially recognized Health Care Assistant (HCA) credential.

HCAP will help meet several high-priority goals in the BC Health Sector by:

- Reducing barriers to enter into health care careers by providing applicants with an opportunity to train to become HCAs while receiving a guaranteed income.
- Increasing the available pool of health care assistants.

## What is a Health Care Assistant?

Health Care Assistants provide personal care in a variety of health care settings including acute care hospitals, assisted living facilities, group homes, long-term care and community care. They are supervised by Registered Nurses and other regulated health care professionals and follow established care plans to provide personal care such as bathing, grooming, dressing, assisting with meals and oral hygiene.

Other duties include:

- Providing socialization and visitation activities
- Documenting information on a patient chart
- Responding to call bells/alarms
- Observing and monitoring patient progress, symptoms and behavioural changes and report significant observations
- Utilizing mechanical aides (specialty beds, lifts, wheelchairs and stretchers) to transport patients
- Providing assistance with positioning, lifting and/or transferring patients using established lifting/safety techniques
- Maintaining a clean and safe environment for patients and staff

On average, fully certified and registered Health Care Assistants earn approximately \$45,091 a year.

## How long is the HCAP program?

The education portion of the Health Career Access Program can take up to 10 months to complete.

After graduation from college, the Health Care Support Worker will be required to sign a 12-month return of service agreement in the community they trained in, in exchange for the education provided.

## Who is eligible to apply to the Health Career Access Program?

Anyone who meets the requirements for the Health Care Support Worker (HCSW) qualifications (listed below) is invited to apply. This includes Northern Health employees (internal staff) who may be working in non-direct care roles, external applicants and internationally educated nurses who have not had their qualifications recognized, and individuals with no health sector experience.

Applicants must also ensure they meet their relevant post-secondary schools Health Care Assistant program requirements. Short listed candidates will be contact and informed of these requirements.

### Education

- Grade 10, including the successful completion of English 10, or equivalency
- [For guidance on the English Language Competency Requirement](#)
- Any other post-secondary requirements, identified by the college

### Skills

- Ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing
- Ability to deal with other effectively
- Ability to organize work
- Physical ability to carry out the duties of the position
- Ability to operate related equipment

## How do I apply to HCAP program if I am a Northern Health employee or external Applicant?

**Step 1:** Apply to a Health Care Support Worker position. Internal applicants apply on [Northern Health's internal employment page](#). External applicants apply on [Northern Health's external employment page](#).

Look under the job category:

"Support services – Healthcare Support Worker training opportunities".

Once you receive and accept your offer of employment, work and training will begin.

**Step 2:** You will complete online orientation several weeks before school starts. You will attend school full time until graduation.

**Step 3:** After successfully completing your education you will complete your return of service within the community that you trained in.

Questions: email [HCAP@northernhealth.ca](mailto:HCAP@northernhealth.ca)

### **If no internal or external postings are up, can I still apply?**

If no external or internal postings are currently up, email [HCAP@northernhealth.ca](mailto:HCAP@northernhealth.ca).

### **What is the Return to Service Agreement?**

All HCAP applicants are required to sign a 12-month return to service agreement. By signing, applicants are agreeing to work as a Health Care Assistant for one year upon completion of the program in the community they were hired at and actively seeking regular employment at that site. More information will be provided to short-listed candidates.

### **How much does it cost?**

Successful applicants to the HCAP will be paid a stipend while they attend school. Tuition and mandatory fees and books are also paid for by these provincial funds.

There will be some supplies you will need to provide to get started:

1. A computer and software (i.e. email, office programs, MS Word)
2. Computer camera and speakers and
3. Adequate Internet access

So that you can attend virtual classes with and complete your homework assignments for the college you are attending. If you are living in a rural setting, you may need to talk to the College to determine if your internet speed is adequate.

### **What supplies and costs are covered for me as a student?**

Your tuition and necessary books and fees are covered. A small stipend is available if you apply for it to cover other costs related to Food Safe and First Aide/CPR course fees. For more information on the stipend please review “How much is the pre-requisite support fund (stipend) and how do I apply for it?” below.

Students are expected to bear the costs of fuel/mileage to and from school, including parking expenses.

For some students from smaller remote communities who are required to travel to a larger community for clinical labs and clinical placements, your travel and accommodation costs will be covered by Northern Health under specific conditions. You will be given specific information on this when you are accepted into the college portion of this program.

## **What if I don't have Food Safe or CPR when I apply to the program?**

You may need to look for First Aid/CPR courses that are offered in your community and book them as soon as possible. You may be already be in school by the time the course is available. You may need to take this training on the weekend when you are not in class

## **How do I complete the pre-requisites course and other hiring requirements? How is it paid for? Do I take it outside of work or school? As part of work? As part of school?**

Students should arrange First Aid, CPR or Food Safe training through the links in the [Provincial online orientation](#). They should be scheduling this training as soon as they can get into the next course, and before their college program begins.

There is a stipend available to help cover part of the cost for these course. – SEE THE STIPEND SECTION BELOW for more info

**Immunizations and Tuberculosis (TB) testing:** you are to make appointments for TB testing and getting updated vaccinations as soon as you know you are hired into a position. This testing and vaccinations are necessary for both your schooling and employment.

### **COVID Vaccination**

All HCAP applicants must be fully vaccinated to work in Northern Health facilities as mandated by the Ministry of Health. .

## **Where can I sign up for CPR training?**

You can register for CPR training through the [Canadian RedCross](#).

## **Where can I sign up for First Aid?**

Please review and select from [WorkSafeBC's list of first aid training providers](#).

## **Where can I sign up for Food Safe?**

You can register for the online Food Safe course [here](#).

## **Where can I go to get more information on the immunizations I need?**

Please review the [list of immunizations](#) for Health Care Workers in BC.

## **How much is the pre-requisite support fund (stipend) and how do I apply for it?**

Once an applicant is accepted into the HCAP program a one-time support fund (stipend) amount of \$342 is available to support successful applicants with any costs related to their application to the program, including the completion of pre-requisite courses (Food Safe, Standard First Aid, English Proficiency testing).

This stipend is a fixed amount and not dependent on the type, number, or costs of the pre-requisites required by the applicant. Applicants who are required, as part of his/her enrollment to the HCAP program, to complete an English Language Proficiency Test may be eligible for additional funding.

To qualify applicants must:

- Submit proof of enrollment into HCAP (e.g., a conditional HCSW offer letter pending completion of the prerequisite courses, or a letter from the hiring manager confirming selection into the program).
- Complete and submit an [HCAP Pre-Requisite Stipend Application Form](#) with all supporting documents to the Choose2Care team at Health Match BC.
- Have a valid Social Insurance Number (SIN) as of the date the funds are issued to be eligible to receive the stipend from Health Match BC / HEABC.

### **If you are missing pre-requisites when applying to the health care assistant program at your post-secondary institution (college)?**

It is important that all applicants are ready to enter college. If you are missing pre-requisites needed to get into the health care assistant program (i.e. Math or English or other equivalency, you might be required to write a placement test as part of your admission requirements. You must check with your College Admissions office advisors as soon as possible to set up any learning support or testing you may need to qualify for starting college.

There is a very short timeline for you to upgrade and you may need to fast track any pre requisites needed for upgrading.

### **Can I take the program part time?**

No. As an HCSW you are in school fulltime for the term of the program. There is no opportunity to take this program part time.

### **What if I don't complete online orientation on time?**

Once a applicant is hired by Northern Health you will receive a package of information including the next steps to begin the 4 online orientations – this may take up to one week to complete. You will be paid for this time.

1. Northern Health “new employee” orientation
2. the Provincial Standard HCAP orientation,
3. Northern Health HCAP orientation
4. SPECO - Student Practice Education Core Orientation

The new hire HSCW should make every effort to complete the online orientations as soon as they are able to log into Learning Hub.

**\* The online orientation requires access to the Learning Hub platform. This platform is not compatible with Mac devices (including iPads and iPhones). We are encouraging all**

employees who experience this disruption to contact their managers who will assist you in completing your online orientation on a Northern Health computer.

## **What is the schedule for the education and clinical placements for the HCSW position?**

Each HCSW will attend school full time. This will include classroom theory and lab practicums and in facility clinical experiences. There is a commitment by the student to complete all assignments and exams. A student will not progress in the program if they fall below expected grades.

## **How do I get my work schedule?**

Your school schedule will be located in your [mySchedule](#) to track your attendance and pay.

## **What do I do if I am sick during an education day?**

Notify your college instructor.

## **How do I schedule and take my accumulated vacation time?**

If you are an internal candidate with vacation banks, you may need to arrange to take available vacation time before or after the program starts/finishes. You will not be able to take vacation time during the days you are attending school. In addition, per your contract, you can carry over 5 days per year to a maximum of 10 days (notice of intent to carry over has to go to payroll by October 1st). Any remaining vacation at the end of the year, will be paid out in pay period 4 of the following year.

## **What will my college school schedule look like?**

You will be attending college full time hours.

Each college timetable includes classroom hours (face to face or virtual) , time practicing skills in the lab, time demonstrating your skill in the clinical setting, study time, time for contact with instructors. You will need to put in additional time for completing homework and assignments to ensure you are successful.

You will receive your college timetable once you have completed all your college acceptance requirements

There is no overtime paid out in (wages) related to education time.

## **Why am I required to sign a waiver?**

You are required to sign waivers with both Northern Health and the college you complete the Health Care Assistant (HCA) certificate program.

This waiver permits the sharing of information between Northern Health and the college you are attending. This ensures the best supports can be put into place should you need help to be successful to complete the program.

### **Will there be homework?**

Yes. There will be a series of assignments and tests required for you to complete the Health Care Assistant Program. You will need to develop good time management skills to manage both the HCA program and HCSW work schedules and workloads.

### **Do I need to live in the location of the position I am applying for?**

Yes. You need to be available full-time in the community in which your position resides.

You will need to attend the college campus in your community full-time and complete your return of service agreement in the same community.

If you live in a rural or remote community, you may need to travel to clinical placements and or skills labs to complete your education program. Travel expenses will be covered for those approved situation. More information contact [HCAP@northernhealth.ca](mailto:HCAP@northernhealth.ca).

### **I need help with the NH Learning Hub – who do I ask?**

Contact [Educationservices@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Educationservices@northernhealth.ca)

### **How do I access my NH email?**

You can obtain your network username and password from your site manager after your are hired.

### **How do I access my pay stub?**

You access your paystub through [i-Site](#).

### **Who do I contact if there are issues with my pay?**

You need to complete a [paycheque inquiry form](#) and submit it to your site manager.

### **How do my benefits work now that I am an HCSW or if I am a new hire?**

Your terms and conditions of your benefits are outlined in your letter of offer.

### **What do I do once I successfully complete the HCAP program?**

You will take all steps necessary to become registered Health Care Aide in the BC Care Aide Registry and apply for a HCA position at your primary work site. Short listed candidates will be provided more information through their return-to-service agreements.

## **What happens if I don't complete the Health Care Assistant Certificate Program?**

If you are an internal candidate, that is, were a NH employee whom applied for a posting, the term of the HCSW position will end and Northern Health will return you to your pre-program position/status.

If you are an external candidate, that is, your were hired outside of NH, you will be asked to vacate your HCSW position. You may have opportunity to apply for other NH jobs for which you are qualified.

## **Who do I contact with additional questions?**

Please email [HCAP@northernhealth.ca](mailto:HCAP@northernhealth.ca).