

## Nurse Faculty Loan Program

### Academic Years 2015-2020

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is the primary federal agency for improving health care to people who are geographically isolated or economically or medically vulnerable. HRSA programs help those in need of high-quality primary health care by supporting the training of health professionals – focusing in particular on the geographical distribution of providers to areas where they are needed most.

The purpose of HRSA's Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP) is to increase the number of qualified nurse faculty in the United States. The NFLP provides funding to accredited schools of nursing to establish and operate a student loan fund for students enrolled in advanced nursing degree programs who also commit to becoming nurse faculty. In addition to awarding loans to students, the NFLP also provides loan cancellation, up to 85 percent of the original loan amount, in exchange for completing up to four years of qualified full-time nurse faculty employment after graduation. This report details NFLP's activities and accomplishments from Academic Year (AY) 2015 through 2020, excluding the loan cancellation component.

#### Key Findings

- Of the 2,541 NFLP AY 2015-2020 graduates who reported follow-up data, 80 percent achieved employment as nurse faculty one year after graduation, 91 percent of whom were employed as full-time nurse faculty.
- Seventy-four percent of the 3,494 NFLP graduates during this timeframe earned doctoral degrees and 26 percent earned master's degrees.
- NFLP funded 17 percent of the 11,374 graduates from accredited nurse educator programs in the United States between AY 2015-2016 and AY 2019-2020. This includes 683 NFLP master's degree graduates and 1,203 NFLP doctoral degree graduates who specialized as nurse educators.
- During this five-year period, NFLP nursing faculty graduates reduced the national vacancy rate of full-time nurse faculty by almost two percent, from nine to seven percent.

**Table 1. Select Nurse Faculty Loan Program Characteristics**

Academic Year	Awardees	Students	Graduates	Amount Awarded to Students (in millions)
2019-2020	157	2,270	659	\$29.9
2018-2019	152	2,277	699	\$31.8
2017-2018	149	2,172	800	\$28.6
2016-2017	123	1,998	584	\$27.3
2015-2016	152	2,328	752	\$29.5
TOTAL	203*	5,804*	3,494	\$147.1

\*Columns do not sum to the total because programs and students can receive funding for more than one year.

- The NFLP awarded a total of \$147.1 million in loans to over 5,800 advanced-degree nursing graduate students.
- During AY 2015-2020, 3,494 NFLP-funded nursing students graduated from master's and doctoral degree programs.

## Select Characteristics of NFLP Graduates

- During AY 2015-2020, 74 percent of all NFLP graduates earned doctoral degrees and 26 percent earned master's degrees.
- The percentage of NFLP graduates earning doctoral degrees increased by 14 percent, from 63 percent in AY 2015-2016 to 77 percent in AY 2019-2020, increasing the likelihood of NFLP graduates finding full-time faculty employment.
- Upon graduation from their advanced nursing degree program, 92 percent (N=3,224) of all NFLP graduates between AY 2015-2016 and AY 2019-2020 intended to teach.

**Table 2. NFLP Graduate Degrees Earned**

Academic Year	Total Graduates	Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.)	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)	Doctoral Degree - Other	Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.)	Master of Science (M.S.)
2019-2020	659	330 (50.1%)	152 (23.1%)	23 (3.5%)	134 (20.3%)	20 (3.0%)
2018-2019	699	354 (50.6%)	178 (25.5%)	24 (3.4%)	134 (19.2%)	9 (1.3%)
2017-2018	800	422 (52.8%)	179 (22.4%)	7 (0.9%)	174 (21.8%)	18 (2.3%)
2016-2017	584	287 (49.1%)	152 (26.0%)	4 (0.7%)	127 (21.7%)	14 (2.4%)
2015-2016	752	275 (36.6%)	183 (24.3%)	15 (2.0%)	244 (32.4%)	35 (4.7%)
TOTAL	3,494	1,668 (47.7%)	844 (24.2%)	73 (2.1%)	813 (23.3%)	96 (2.7%)

- The percentage of NFLP graduates who earned Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) degrees increased from 37 percent in AY 2015-2016 to 50 percent in AY 2019-2020. Over the entire period, 48 percent of all NFLP graduates earned D.N.P. degrees.
- Nearly one quarter of NFLP graduates between AY 2015-2016 and AY 2019-2020 earned Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees (24 percent) and another 23 percent earned Masters of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) degrees.

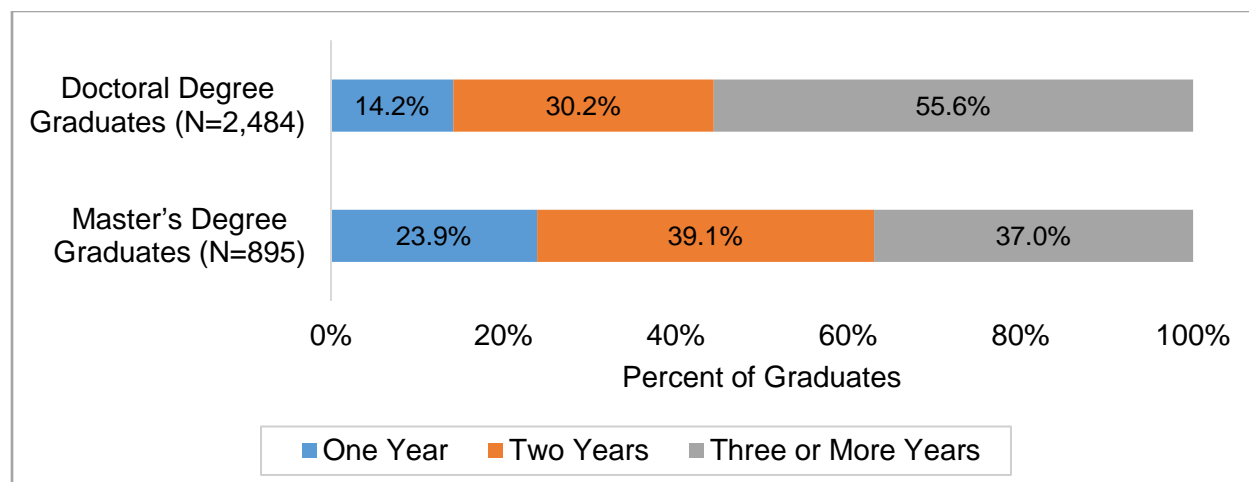
**Table 3. Underrepresented Minority Status of Total Nurses with Advanced Degrees in the United States<sup>1</sup> and AY 2015-2020 NFLP Graduates**

Underrepresented Minority Status	Total U.S. Nurses with Advanced Degrees (N=614,504)	NFLP Graduates (N=3,494)
Underrepresented Minorities*	114,195 (18.6%)	787 (22.5%)
Hispanic/Latino	37,988 (6.2%)	153 (4.4%)
Black or African American	75,215 (12.2%)	587 (16.8%)
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,933 (0.3%)	45 (1.3%)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	435 (0.1%)	26 (0.7%)

\*Underrepresented minority categories are not mutually exclusive.

- The AY 2015-2020 NFLP graduates were about as diverse as the U.S. workforce of nurses with advanced degrees; underrepresented minorities comprised 23 percent of NFLP graduates, compared with 19 percent nationally.
- Seventeen percent of NFLP graduates between AY 2015-2016 and AY 2019-2020 identified as Black or African American compared with 12 percent of all U.S. nurses with advanced degrees.

**Figure 1. Number of Years Loans Received by Type of Degree Earned among NFLP Graduates, AY 2015-2020\***

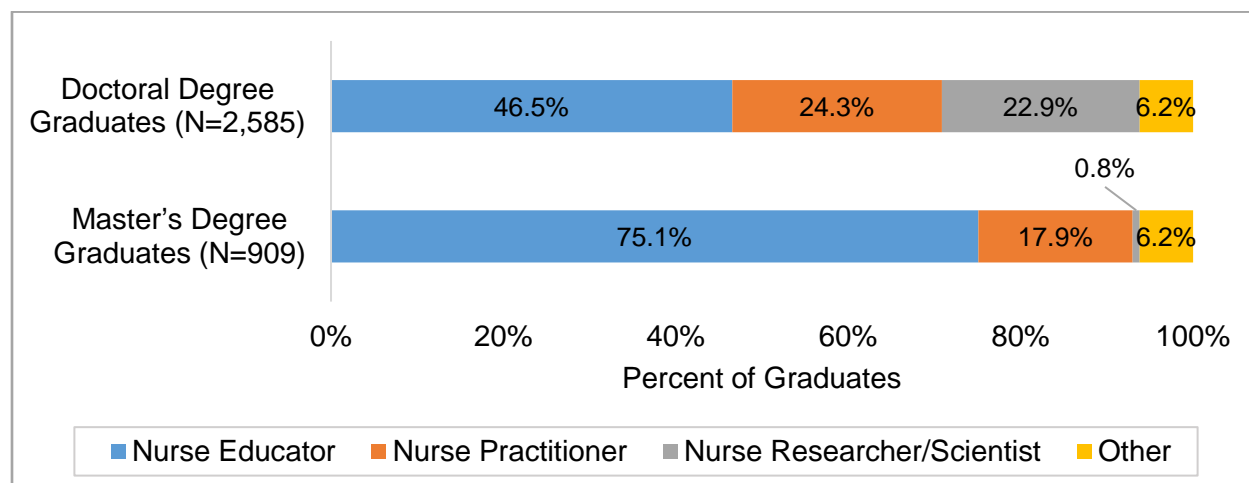


\*Data for the number of years loans received were missing for 115 AY 2015-2020 NFLP graduates. These records were excluded from this analysis.

- During AY 2015-2020, NFLP doctoral degree graduates were more likely to receive three or more years of loans compared to NFLP master's degree graduates (56 percent vs. 37 percent).
- Almost one-quarter of NFLP master's degree graduates received one year of funding (24 percent), while 14 percent of NFLP doctoral degree graduates received only one year of funding between AY 2015-2016 and AY 2019-2020.

<sup>1</sup> Census Bureau. (2016-2020). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Public Use File. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/>.

**Figure 2. Nursing Specialty by Type of Degree Earned among NFLP Graduates, AY 2015-2020**



- During AY 2015-2020, 75 percent of NFLP master's degree graduates and 47 percent of NFLP doctoral degree graduates specialized as nurse educators.
- Between AY 2015-2016 and AY 2019-2020, more NFLP doctoral degree graduates specialized as nurse practitioners (24 percent) compared to NFLP master's degree graduates (18 percent).
- Twenty-three percent of NFLP doctoral degree graduates specialized as researchers/scientists compared with less than one percent of NFLP master's degree graduates, between AY 2015-2016 and AY 2019-2020.

**Table 4. Graduates from Nursing Education Programs in the United States<sup>2</sup> and the NFLP**

Academic Year	Total Graduates from Nursing Education Programs in the United States	NFLP Graduates from Nursing Education Programs
2019-2020	3,292	340 (10.3%)
2018-2019	1,850	383 (20.7%)
2017-2018	2,058	438 (21.3%)
2016-2017	2,022	310 (15.3%)
2015-2016	2,152	415 (19.3%)
TOTAL	11,374	1,886 (16.6%)

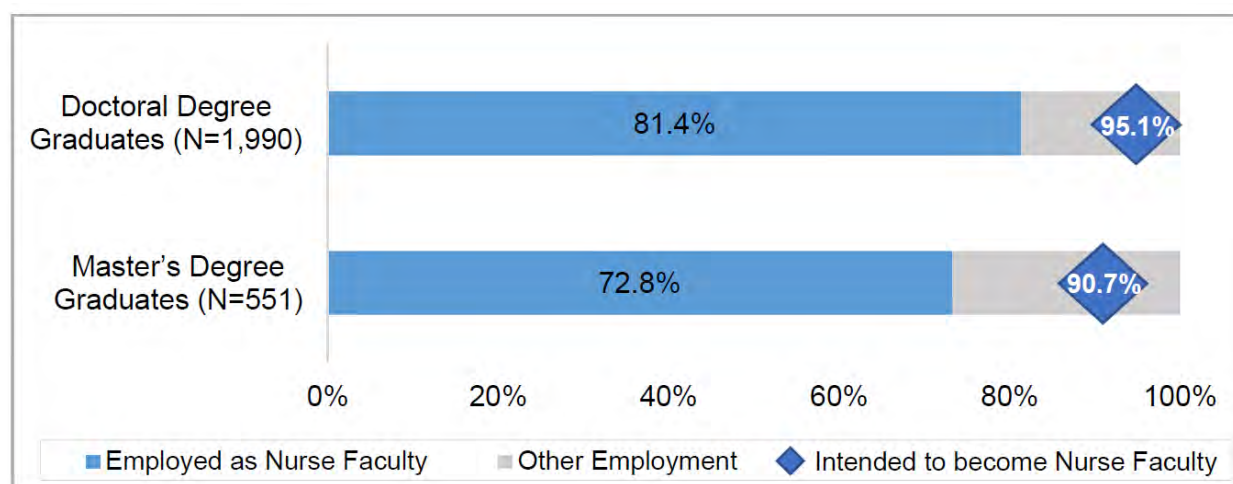
- NFLP funded between 310 and 438 graduates from nursing education programs per year between AY 2015-2016 and AY 2019-2020, graduating a total of 1,886 nurse educators during the five-year period.
- NFLP funded approximately 17 percent of the 11,374 graduates from accredited nursing education programs in the United States between AY 2015-2016 and AY 2019-2020.

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (2015-2020). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>.

## Employment Data for AY 2015-2020 NFLP Graduates at One-Year Follow-up<sup>3</sup>

- Seventy-three percent of all AY 2015-2020 NFLP graduates reported follow-up data (N=2,541).
- Eighty percent (N=2,021) of all AY 2015-2020 NFLP graduates who reported follow-up data achieved employment as nurse faculty one year after graduation, 91 percent of whom were employed as full-time nurse faculty (N=1,839).
- Of the NFLP graduates that reported other employment (N=520), 24 percent had applied to full-time nurse faculty positions, 20 percent were employed in a primary care setting, and 14 percent were employed in a medically underserved and/or rural community.

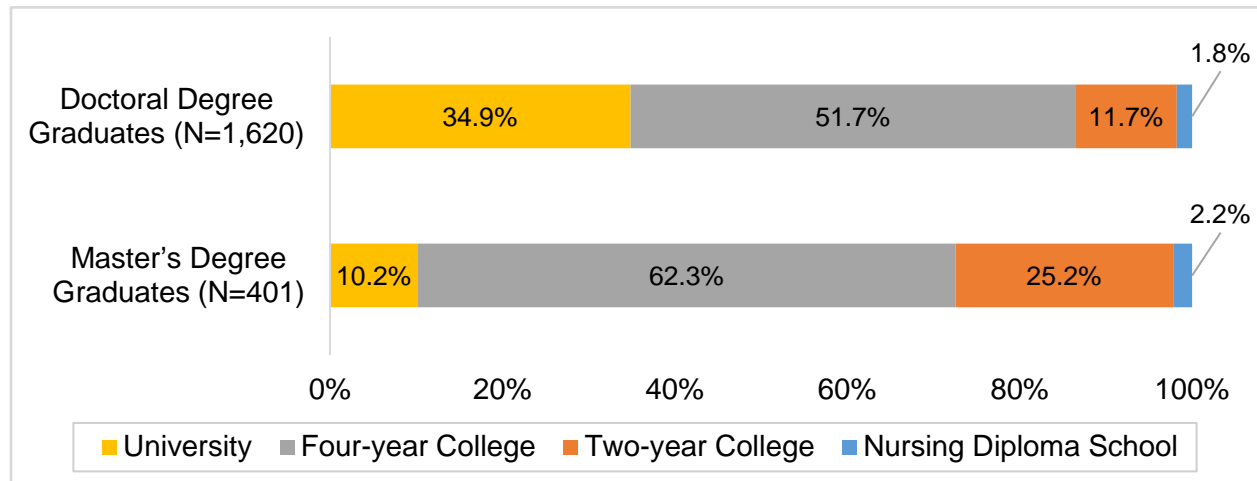
**Figure 3. Intentions at Graduation and Actual Employment Status at One-Year Follow-up by Type of Degree Earned, NFLP Graduates AY 2015-2020**



- When comparing intentions by degree earned, AY 2015-2020 NFLP doctoral degree graduates who provided one-year follow-up data were more likely to report intending to become nurse faculty (95 percent) when they graduated compared to NFLP master's degree graduates who provided one-year follow-up data (91 percent).
- In terms of employment, 81 percent of the 1,990 NFLP doctoral degree graduates and 73 percent of the 551 master's degree graduates between AY 2015-2016 and AY 2019-2020 who reported follow-up data secured employment as nurse faculty one year after graduation.

<sup>3</sup> This section reports follow-up data for AY 2015-2020 NFLP graduates. Data were collected in AY 2016-2021, one year after graduation.

**Figure 4. NFLP Graduate Faculty Appointments at One-Year Follow-up by Type of Appointment and Degree Earned, AY 2015-2020**



Note: This data reflects graduates in faculty appointments one year after graduation (N=2,021).

- Of the AY 2015-2020 NFLP graduates with faculty appointments one year after graduation, 62 percent of master's degree graduates and 52 percent of doctoral degree graduates were teaching in four-year colleges.
- AY 2015-2020 NFLP doctoral degree graduates were more likely than master's degree graduates to teach graduate-level courses at universities (35 percent vs. 10 percent, respectively); master's degree graduates were more likely than doctoral degree graduates to teach in two-year colleges (25 percent vs. 12 percent, respectively).

## NFLP Graduate Impact on National Full-Time Nurse Faculty Vacancy Rate

- According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, there was a vacancy rate for full-time nurse faculty positions of seven percent in 2020, equivalent to almost 1,500 vacant positions. As a result, nursing schools turned away over 66,000 qualified applicants for baccalaureate programs in 2020.<sup>4</sup>
- While the top reason given for turning away applicants was insufficient clinical sites, almost half of baccalaureate nursing programs reported rejecting qualified applications due to an insufficient number of faculty.

<sup>4</sup> American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2020). Faculty Vacancy Survey Report. Retrieved from <https://www.aacnursing.org/News-Information/Research-Data-Center/Faculty-Vacancy-Survey-Reports>.

**Table 5. Full-Time Nursing Faculty Vacancy Rate<sup>5</sup> and NFLP Graduates in Full-Time Faculty Positions**

Academic Year	Full-Time Positions Budgeted	Vacant Full-Time Positions	Vacancy Rate	NFLP Graduates in Full-Time Faculty Positions	Vacancy Rate without NFLP Graduates
2020-2021	22,838	1,492	6.5%	301	7.9%
2019-2020	22,649	1,637	7.2%	344	8.7%
2018-2019	21,685	1,715	7.9%	459	10.0%
2017-2018	21,533	1,565	7.3%	357	8.9%
2016-2017	19,830	1,567	7.9%	378	9.8%
TOTAL	108,535	7,976	7.4%	1,839	9.0%

- The number of full-time nurse faculty positions in the United States increased by 3,008 positions between AY 2016-2017 and AY 2020-2021. During that same period, 1,839 NFLP graduates reported full-time nurse faculty employment, potentially filling 61 percent of the new faculty positions.
- NFLP nurse faculty graduates from AY 2015-2016 to AY 2019-2020 reduced the vacancy rate of nurse faculty by almost two percent, from nine to seven percent, between AY 2016-2017 and AY 2020-2021.

For more information, visit the website: [bhw.hrsa.gov](http://bhw.hrsa.gov).

<sup>5</sup> American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2016-2020). Faculty Vacancy Survey Report. Retrieved from <https://www.aacnursing.org/News-Information/Research-Data-Center/Faculty-Vacancy-Survey-Reports>.