



## 2026 INFORMATIONAL BRIEF

# The State of Hawai'i's LPN & RN Workforces

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## INTRODUCTION

This informational brief summarizes the state of the LPN and RN workforces in the state of Hawai'i as of the end of 2025. A more detailed discussion is available in the 2025 Hawai'i Nursing Workforce Supply Statewide Report.

Questions about this or other workforce reports should be directed to [hscndata@hawaii.edu](mailto:hscndata@hawaii.edu).

## THE LPN WORKFORCE

### Current State

- Hawai'i has a severe shortage of LPNs which is expected to persist through at least 2037.<sup>1</sup>
- The shortage is due to persistently high employment demand<sup>2</sup> and limited capacity in local LPN education programs.

### Available Supply & Education Capacity

- As of March 2025, 1,423 Hawai'i residents held an active Hawai'i LPN license.<sup>3</sup>
- HSCN estimates that 1,210 LPNs are currently working in a nursing related role in the state.<sup>4</sup>
- As of academic year 2023-2024, Hawai'i schools of nursing have the capacity to admit approximately 75 new LPN students.<sup>5</sup>
- In academic year 2023-2024, Hawai'i schools of nursing graduated 68 LPN students. Of these, 66% graduated from a program on the Neighbor Islands.<sup>5</sup>
- The development of a standalone LPN program at University of Hawai'i Maui College contributed to a 120% increase in LPN education capacity in AY 2022-2023 as compared to the two previous academic years.<sup>6</sup>

### Employment and Utilization Demand

- In 2024, there were 205 vacant LPN positions statewide representing a 23% vacancy rate.<sup>2</sup>
- Employers report that LPN positions are difficult to fill as open positions can take over a year to fill.<sup>2</sup>
- Hawai'i's population, given its size, demographics, and health characteristics, is estimated to need 2,800 LPNs.<sup>1</sup> Given the available supply of 1,210 LPNs in the state, Hawai'i has about 43% of the LPNs it needs to meet healthcare utilization demand.
- Utilization demand for LPN services is projected to increase year over year, and by 2037, Hawai'i is expected to have a deficit of over 2,000 LPNs.<sup>1</sup>

## LPN Supply & Demand by County

- Every county has a shortage of LPNs, though it is worse in Hawai'i and Kaua'i Counties than in Honolulu and Maui Counties.
- By 2037, Hawai'i and Kaua'i Counties are expected to have less than 15% of the LPNs it needs to respond to demand for LPN services.

**Table 1. LPN Adequacy by County, 2022-2037<sup>1</sup>**

	HONOLULU	HAWAI'I	MAUI	KAUA'I
<b>Estimated % Adequacy in 2022</b>	28%	57%	42%	51
<b>Projected % Adequacy in 2037</b>	20%	14%	126%	10%
<b>Adequacy Change 2022-2037 (percentage points)</b>	-8	-43	+84	-41

The projections attributed 100% of UHMC's LPN program students to Maui Co. despite the program serving students in every county. As a result, adequacy change in Maui County is overestimated and adequacy change in the other counties is underestimated.

**Table 2. LPN Vacancies and Vacancy Rate by County, 2024<sup>2</sup>**

	HONOLULU	HAWAI'I	MAUI	KAUA'I
<b>Vacancies</b>	159	36	28	19
<b>Vacancy Rate</b>	23%	26%	26%	33%

In the original report, data were reported by island. Maui County vacancies and vacancy rates were computed by HSCN.

## Workforce Development Implications & Priorities

- Existing LPN education capacity lags behind employer demand, resulting in greater utilization of RNs in Hawai'i than is typical of states where the supply of LPNs is in better alignment with demand.
- Collaboration between employers and LPN education programs improves alignment between LPN education capacity increases and employment demand.
- Replicating the UH Maui College LPN program model in other counties can alleviate resource strain on UHMC while fostering better collaborations between the schools and employers in each county.

# THE RN WORKFORCE

## Current State

- Hawai'i has enough RNs statewide to address the healthcare needs of the state. If there is no reduction in pre-license RN education capacity or unexpectedly high rates of early retirement, Hawai'i will have an adequate supply of RNs through at least 2037.<sup>1</sup>
- Although the state has enough RNs, overall, there are supply deficits on the Neighbor Islands and in some practice specialties.

## Available Supply & Education Capacity

- As of March 2025, 17,914 Hawai'i residents held an active Hawai'i RN license.<sup>3</sup>
- HSCN estimates that 16,085 RNs are currently working in a nursing related role in the state.<sup>4</sup>
- As of academic year 2023-2024, Hawai'i schools of nursing have the capacity to admit approximately 600 new pre-license RN students (25% ADN, 75% BSN).<sup>5</sup>
- In academic year 2023-2024, Hawai'i schools of nursing graduated about 430 pre-license RN students (30% ADN, 70% BSN). 68% of ADN graduates and 13% of BSN graduates completed a program at a Neighbor Island school.<sup>5</sup>
- Schools report that their education capacity is limited predominantly by difficulty recruiting and retaining full-time faculty and a highly competitive clinical placement environment.<sup>5</sup>

## Employment and Utilization Demand

- In 2024, there were 1,043 vacant RN positions statewide across all specialties and settings. The overall RN vacancy rate was 10% which was down from 14% in 2022.<sup>2</sup>
- By the end of 2025, Hawai'i employers were reporting a decrease in the number of vacant positions, shorter application posting times, reduced but steady new graduate RN hiring, and decrease utilization of travelers. All of these are positive indicators of workforce adequacy.
- Although utilization demand for RN services is projected to increase year over year, Hawai'i's available supply of RNs is expected to remain adequate through 2037.<sup>1</sup> This includes a slight oversupply on O'ahu which could be recruited to support Neighbor Island utilization demand.

## RN Supply & Demand by County

- Though the available supply of RNs in the state is sufficient to provide care for the population, only Honolulu County has enough nurses to meet utilization demand. All Neighbor Island counties have RN deficits to varying degrees.
- Though all of the Neighbor Island counties have an existing RN workforce, every county except Kaua'i is projected to see their shortages improve by 2037. Kaua'i's shortage is projected to get worse over the same period.

**Table 3. RN Adequacy by County, 2022-2037<sup>1</sup>**

	HONOLULU	HAWAI'I	MAUI	KAUA'I
<b>Estimated % Adequacy in 2022</b>	106%	89%	90%	74%
<b>Projected % Adequacy in 2037</b>	110%	96%	91%	66%
<b>Adequacy Change 2022-2037 (percentage points)</b>	+4	+7	+1	-8

**Table 4. RN Vacancies and Vacancy Rate by County, 2024<sup>2</sup>**

	HONOLULU	HAWAI'I	MAUI	KAUA'I
<b>Vacancies</b>	811	209	88	64
<b>Vacancy Rate</b>	12%	18%	15%	17%

*In the original report, RN vacancies were reported by specialty and were only reported for those specialties with 20 or more vacancies on O'ahu and 10 or more vacancies on the Neighbor Islands. Additionally, the data were reported by island rather than by county. HSCN calculated the overall RN vacancy rate by aggregating the reported RN specialties. HSCN calculated the Maui County vacancies and vacancy rate by aggregating data from the islands of Maui, Lāna'i, and Moloka'i.*

## Workforce Development Implications & Priorities

- Focus should be on retaining nurses and preserving existing capacity in local pre-license RN programs to maintain the adequacy of the state's RN workforce through 2037.
- Currently, there is no indication that the expansion of pre-licensure education capacity in the state is necessary and there is reasonable cause to question whether employers would be able to absorb more new graduates than local schools currently produce.
- Healthcare delivery on the Neighbor Islands requires proportionally more resources relative to the residential population. Focus should be placed on preserving Neighbor Island RN education capacity, improving recruitment of the slight oversupply of nurses on O'ahu to the Neighbor Islands, and enacting policies designed to drive down the cost of living and increase the available stock of affordable housing.
- A perpetual source of funding is crucial to retain local access to specialty RN training, especially for harder to fill specialties such as emergency, critical care, and labor & delivery.

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