



Certified Nurse Aide
WisCaregiverCNA.com

Launch Your Career in Health Care



Participant Training Guide

Version 3, Published September 2026

Program information in this guide reflects current WisCaregiver Careers CNA policy guidelines based on Wisconsin DHS guidance at the time of publication. All prior versions are no longer valid for policy or program guidance.

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Welcome to WisCaregiver Careers!

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE EVERY DAY

- Do you enjoy caring for others?
- Are you ready to start a meaningful career in a field that is always in demand?
- Are you open to learning and growing in a fast-paced care environment?
- Are you ready to build skills you can carry with you for life?

It has never been easier to explore a career in health care.

WisCaregiver Careers is a workforce development program offered through Wisconsin's Department of Health Services in partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and participating skilled nursing facilities.

YOU WILL EARN WHILE YOU LEARN

Employment. Education. Certification. Advancement.

The program provides individuals with a pathway to CNA certification through an entry-level position with a participating skilled nursing facility. Once hired, the facility coordinates nurse aide training and testing. This allows individuals to earn wages, gain hands-on experience, and build valuable skills while working toward certification.

Becoming a certified nurse aide provides an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others and can open the door to future opportunities in health care.

READY TO GET STARTED?

Visit the WisCaregiver Careers CNA website to learn more and register :

- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/caregiver-career/cna.htm>

NEED ASSISTANCE?

Contact the WisCaregiver Careers CNA team for assistance with program questions.

- **Phone:** 1-833-315-CARE (2273)
- **Email:** wicaregivercna@uwgb.edu

Program Purpose

WisCaregiver Careers was created to help address the ongoing need for certified nurse aides in Wisconsin skilled nursing facilities.

The program supports individuals who are interested in starting a career in health care by helping them connect with participating skilled nursing facilities, gain hands-on experience, complete CNA training and testing, and continue employment after certification.

The purpose of WisCaregiver Careers is to:

- Help individuals begin a career as a certified nurse aide.
- Support participating skilled nursing facilities in recruiting and training new CNAs.
- Provide a pathway for individuals to earn wages while working toward CNA certification.
- Strengthen the long-term care workforce by continuing employment after certification.

Participant Requirements and Commitments

PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS

To participate in the program, an individual must:

- Reside in the state of Wisconsin.
- Be working toward CNA certification for the first time. The program does not cover recertifications or lapsed certifications.
- Be hired for an entry-level position at a participating skilled nursing facility *before* beginning CNA training.
- Complete CNA training and testing in person within the state.

PARTICIPANT COMMITMENTS

Participants are responsible for:

- Providing accurate registration, contact, and employment information.
- Following the employer's hiring, training, testing, background check, and health and safety requirements.
- Completing CNA certification **within 365 days** after training is completed.
- Setting up and maintaining an accurate TMU account and completing the required participant steps **within 90 days** of CNA certification.
- Working with the employer to ensure employment information is verified in TMU.
- Continuing employment at the same participating skilled nursing facility for six months *after* certification to qualify for the \$500 retention bonus.

* Disclosure:

Registering for WisCaregiver Careers is not a job application, and the program does not place individuals with employers or guarantee employment. Each facility manages its own hiring process.

CNA Role and Career Opportunities

UNDERSTANDING THE CNA ROLE

Certified nurse aides provide basic care and support to residents under the direction of licensed nursing staff. CNAs play an important role in skilled nursing facilities by helping residents with daily needs, supporting comfort and safety, and building positive relationships with residents and care teams.

CNA responsibilities may include:

- Assisting residents with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, eating, and mobility.
- Helping residents feel safe, comfortable, and respected.
- Observing and reporting changes in a resident's condition to nursing staff.
- Supporting infection control, safety, and resident care procedures.
- Building positive relationships with residents, families, and care teams.

SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

CNAs benefit from strong communication skills, patience, dependability, and attention to detail. This role also requires flexibility, compassion, and the ability to stay active throughout a shift.

Common skills and traits include:

- Listening and communicating clearly.
- Asking questions and following directions.
- Showing patience, empathy, and concern for others.
- Paying attention to details and changes.
- Remaining dependable and flexible.
- Performing physical tasks throughout the workday.

KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY

CNA work may involve basic health care concepts, infection control, resident safety, documentation, and communication with the care team. Depending on the facility, CNAs may also use electronic medical records, basic documentation tools, video communication platforms, or other workplace technology.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

Successful completion of CNA training and testing results in placement on Wisconsin's Nurse Aide Registry. Additional education and training are required for individuals who want to advance into other health care roles.

CNA Role and Career Opportunities (cont'd)

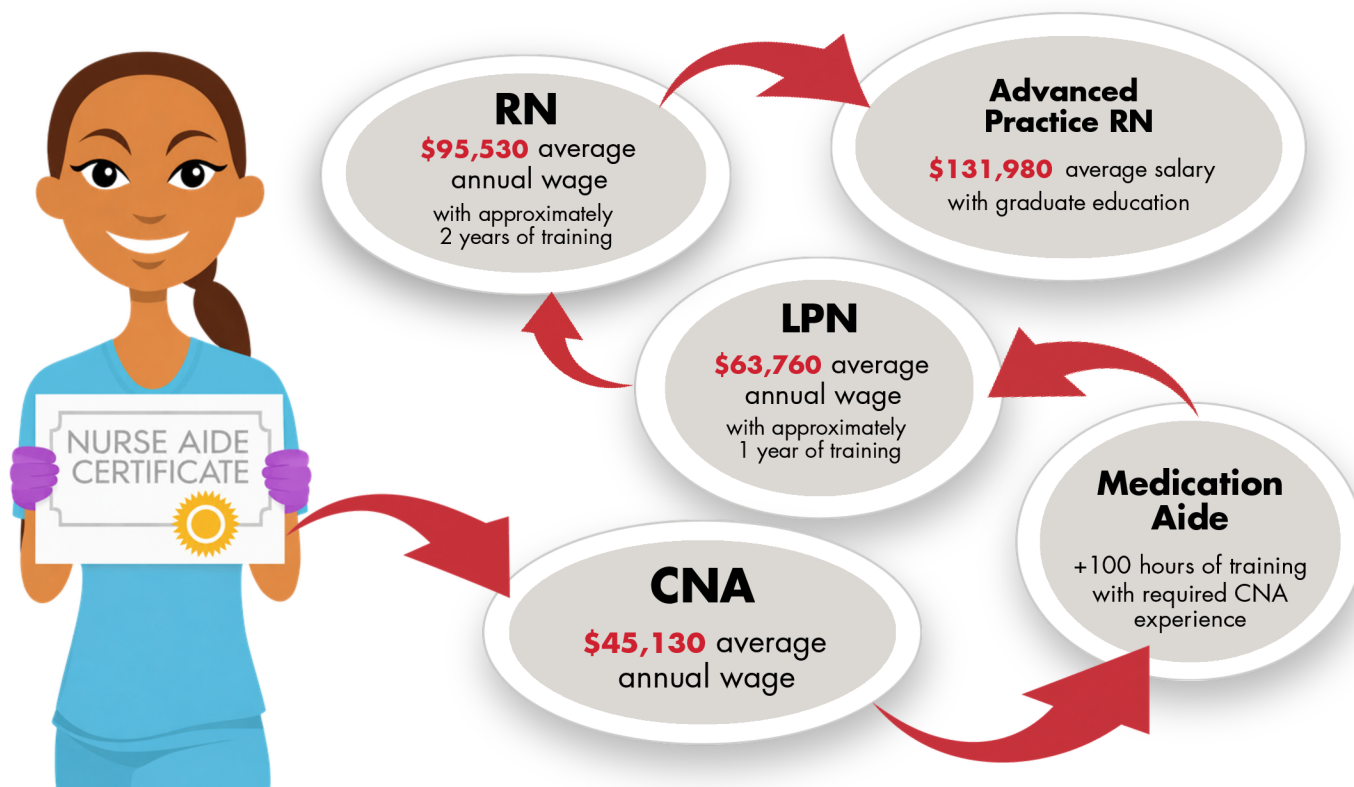
WHERE CNA EXPERIENCE CAN LEAD

CNA experience can be a strong first step into the health care field. It helps individuals build hands-on care skills, gain confidence, and better understand long-term care.

For individuals who want to continue growing in health care, CNA experience may support future opportunities such as:

- Medication Aide
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Registered Nurse
- Medical Assistant
- Phlebotomy Technician
- Dialysis Technician
- Health Information Technology
- Care Coordination
- Assisted Living Administration

Additional education, training, or certification may be required for roles beyond CNA certification.



Source:

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, Wisconsin, most recent available data.

WisCaregiver CNA Pathway

The pathway below gives individuals a general overview of the steps involved in joining WisCaregiver Careers and becoming a Certified Nurse Aide (CNA). Some steps may vary based on the employer's hiring process, training schedule, and testing availability.

Step 1: Make sure you are eligible

Individuals may be eligible if they:

- Live in Wisconsin.
- Are pursuing CNA certification for the first time.
- Plan to work for a participating skilled nursing facility.

Step 2: Register for WisCaregiver Careers CNA

Individuals begin by completing the WisCaregiver Careers CNA registration form:

- <https://uwgreenbay.tfaforms.net/498>

After registering, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay will send next-step information by email. Most individuals should receive this information within 72 hours.

* Important:

Do not create a WisCaregiver Connections account before receiving instructions from UW-Green Bay.

* Disclosure:

Response times may be delayed if registration is submitted on a weekend, holiday, or during a high volume of registrations.

Step 3: Set up your WisCaregiver Connections profile

Individuals should follow the instructions provided by UW-Green Bay to complete their profile in WisCaregiver Connections, powered by Handshake.

WisCaregiver Connections may be used to search for employment opportunities with participating employers.

Step 4: Finding employment with a participating skilled nursing facility

Individuals can use the [WisCaregiver Careers CNA map](#) to find participating skilled nursing facilities where they may want to work.

Step 5: Search and apply for entry-level positions

Individuals should look for available entry-level positions at the facility, such as:

- CNA Trainee
- Hospitality Aide
- Activities Aide
- Dietary Aide
- Housekeeping
- Food Service

Individuals may search for jobs through WisCaregiver Connections or directly on the facility's website.

Applications must be submitted directly to the facility. Registering for WisCaregiver Careers is **not** a job application and does **not** guarantee employment.

WisCaregiver CNA Pathway (cont'd)

Step 6: Get hired and begin CNA training

Once hired by a participating skilled nursing facility, the employer will coordinate in-person CNA training through an in-house or approved training provider.

The employer will explain how CNA training and testing costs will be handled.

Step 7: Complete CNA training and testing

Individuals must complete the required CNA training and take both parts of the Wisconsin nurse aide competency exam:

- Skills Exam
- Knowledge Exam

WisCaregiver Careers covers the cost of one attempt for each part of the exam. No-shows and missed testing appointments count as an attempt. If additional attempts are needed, the employer will explain how those costs will be handled.

Step 8: Become a certified CNA

After successfully completing training and both parts of the exam, the individual will become a Wisconsin-certified CNA.

Once certified, the individual must complete the required employment information in Wisconsin TestMaster Universe (TMU) and select the skilled nursing facility where they work.

The employer will verify the employment information and make any necessary corrections.

*** Important:**

The individual and employer must complete all required TMU information accurately within 90 days of CNA certification to remain eligible for the retention bonus.

Step 9: Stay employed and earn the \$500 bonus

After becoming certified, the individual must remain employed by the same participating skilled nursing facility for six additional months.

If all program requirements are met, the employer will pay the individual a \$500 retention bonus and WisCaregiver Careers will reimburse the facility.

Employment and Facility Requirements

Before employment or CNA training begins, individuals may need to complete facility-specific requirements as part of the hiring process. Each skilled nursing facility has its own policies, so individuals should follow the instructions provided by the facility.

PARTICIPATING EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for the CNA pathway, an individual must be hired by a participating Medicaid-certified Wisconsin skilled nursing facility (SNF).

Employment with assisted living facilities (AFLS), Community-Based Residential Facilities (CBRFs), Residential Care Apartment Complexes (RCACs), memory care facilities, in-home care providers, or other non-SNF employers do **not** qualify.

If an individual is unsure whether a facility qualifies, they can check the [**WisCaregiver Careers CNA employer map**](#) to confirm the facility is listed as a participating skilled nursing facility before beginning employer-coordinated CNA training.

BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENTS

Participating facilities are responsible for completing any required background checks as part of their hiring process. Background check requirements may vary by facility and position.

Individuals should follow the facility's instructions and provide any required information or documentation in a timely manner.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Facilities may have health and safety requirements that must be completed before employment or training begins. These may include health screenings, immunization records, TB testing, physical requirements, orientation, or other facility-specific requirements.

The facility will discuss what is required and when it must be completed.

Training, Testing, and Reimbursement

Once an individual is hired by a participating skilled nursing facility, the facility will coordinate CNA training through an in-house or approved training provider.

CNA TRAINING

CNA training must be completed in person within Wisconsin.

Training schedules, locations, attendance requirements, and related policies may vary by facility or training provider. The facility will explain where training will take place, when training begins, and what the individual is responsible for completing.

CNA TESTING

After training is completed, individuals must complete both parts of the Wisconsin nurse aide competency exam:

- Skills Exam
- Knowledge Exam

Program funding covers one attempt for each part of the exam when all requirements are met. Missed testing appointments and no-shows count as an attempt.

If additional attempts are needed, the facility will explain how those costs will be handled based on its own policies.

TRAINING AND TESTING REIMBURSEMENT

Training and testing costs are handled through the participating skilled nursing facility. WisCaregiver Careers does not pay individuals directly for training or testing costs.

The facility is responsible for explaining how training and testing costs will be handled, including whether costs are paid upfront by the facility or reimbursed after certification.

For certifications completed **on or after January 1, 2026**, participating skilled nursing facilities request eligible training and testing reimbursement through ForwardHealth.

TMU Setup and Participant Tracking

Wisconsin TestMaster Universe, also known as TMU, is used for CNA testing, certification, employment information, and retention bonus tracking.

After certification, individuals must make sure their TMU account is accurate and connected to the participating skilled nursing facility where they work.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Participants are responsible for:

- Setting up and maintaining an accurate TMU account.
- Using a personal email address they can access.
- Entering the required employment information in TMU.
- Selecting the participating skilled nursing facility where they work.
- Working with their employer to make sure employment information is verified.

EMPLOYER VERIFICATION

After the individual adds their employment information in TMU, the participating skilled nursing facility must review and verify the information.

If any information needs to be corrected, the individual should work directly with the facility to make sure the TMU record is accurate.

90-DAY REQUIREMENT

All required TMU information must be completed accurately within 90 days of CNA certification.

If TMU information is missing, incorrect, or not verified within the required timeline, the participant may lose eligibility for the \$500 retention bonus.

Retention Bonus

The \$500 retention bonus is available to eligible individuals who complete CNA certification and continue working at the same participating skilled nursing facility for six months after certification.

To qualify, the individual must:

- Complete CNA training and testing.
- Become listed as eligible on Wisconsin's Nurse Aide Registry.
- Have accurate employment information entered and verified in TMU.
- Complete six months of employment after certification at the same participating skilled nursing facility.
- Meet all program requirements.

After the six-month employment period is complete, the participating skilled nursing facility is responsible for completing the required verification in TMU.

If all program requirements are met, the facility pays the \$500 retention bonus to the individual.

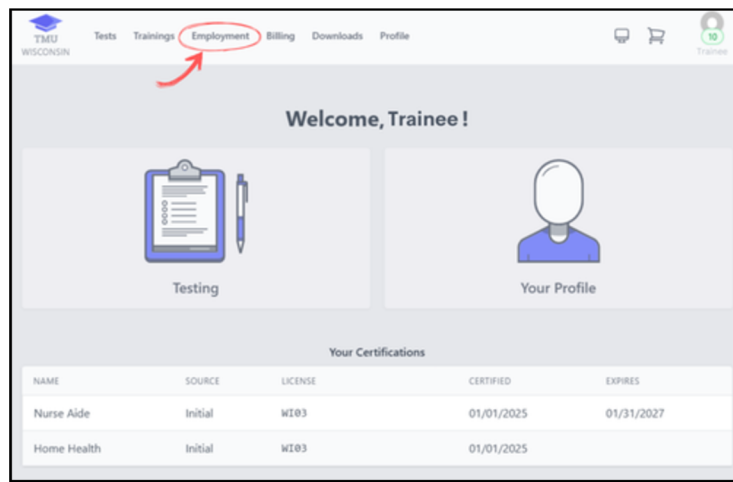
TMU ACCOUNT SETUP INSTRUCTIONS

Your employer will direct you to complete the steps outlined in the trainee section of this guide.

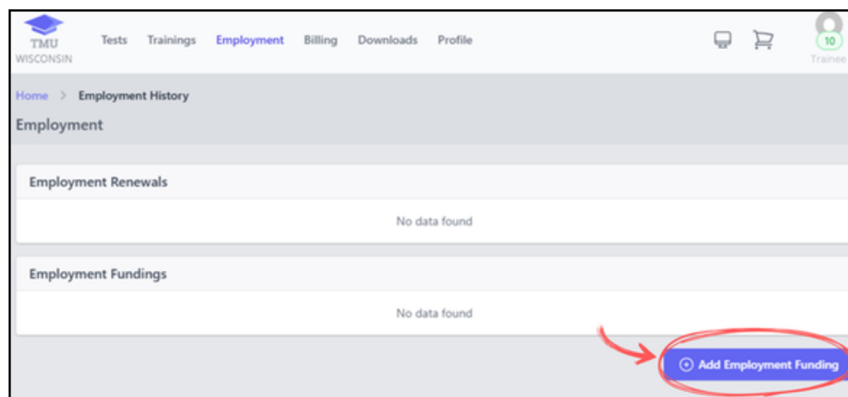
Your employer cannot complete their required steps until you have completed yours.

Step 1 Have the **participant** log into their TMU account.

Step 2 On the main login screen, select 'Employment'.



Step 3 The participant should then select 'Add Employment Funding'.



Step 4 Select the Skilled Nursing Facility's name.

TMU WISCONSIN Tests Trainings Employment Billing Downloads Profile

Home > Employment History > Create Employment Funding

Create Employment Funding

Employment

EMPLOYER *

Select Employer

Create

Step 5 Once the facility's name has been selected, click 'Create'.

TMU WISCONSIN Tests Trainings Employment Billing Downloads Profile

Home > Employment History > Create Employment Funding

Create Employment Funding

Employment

EMPLOYER *

Employed Facility Name

Create

Step 6 TMU will display an automatically generated Date of Hire (DoH). This date is not expected to be accurate and is not a problem at this stage. Your employer will update the DoH with the correct hire date during **Part Two** of their employer instructions.

TMU WISCONSIN Tests Trainings Employment Billing Downloads Profile

Home > Employment History

Employment

Successfully created employment funding request.

Employment Renewals

No data found

Employment Fundings

Employer	Date of Hire	Status	Verified	Created
Employed Facility Name	02/25/2025	Pending	Pending Verification	02/25/2025 04:17 PM

Add Employment Funding

PROGRAM TIMELINES AND POLICY GUIDELINES

CERTIFICATION TIMELINE

Individuals must complete CNA certification within 365 days after CNA training is completed.

TESTING ATTEMPTS

One attempt is covered for each part of the Wisconsin nurse aide competency exam:

- Skills Exam
- Knowledge Exam

Missed testing appointments and no-shows count as an attempt.

If an additional attempt is needed, the participating skilled nursing facility will explain how those costs are handled based on its own policies.

INITIAL TMU EMPLOYMENT SETUP

After certification, individuals must complete the required employment information in TMU and select the participating skilled nursing facility where they work.

The individual and employer must make sure all required TMU information is accurate and completed within 90 days of CNA certification.

RETENTION BONUS TIMELINE

To qualify for the \$500 retention bonus, the individual must remain employed at the same participating skilled nursing facility for six months after certification.

After the six-month employment period is complete, the facility is responsible for completing the required verification in TMU.

RECERTIFICATION POLICY

WisCaregiver Careers supports individuals pursuing CNA certification for the first time. The program does not cover CNA recertifications or lapsed certifications.

RETROACTIVE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Effective January 1, 2026, WisCaregiver Careers does not provide retroactive reimbursement for CNA training, testing, or retention bonuses.

Participants who exceed the required program timelines for completing certification, or employment verification will not be eligible for reimbursement through the program. Employers must follow the ForwardHealth Medicaid reimbursement process for any applicable costs.

Exceptions may apply if approved by WisCaregiver Careers in coordination with DHS.