Nursing

Nurses who work in forensic settings use specialized knowledge and skills to provide patient care and treatment. Nurses working in forensic behavioral health also have knowledge of the criminal court system and issues that exist where behavioral health and the law intersect.

About DSHS

The Department of Social and Health Services' Behavioral Health and Habilitation Administration provides information about careers in forensic behavioral health which play an important role in improving the lives of people with behavioral health conditions involved in the criminal court system. For more information about positions open within DSHS, please visit www.careers.wa.gov.

Forensic Behavioral Health

Forensic behavioral health is the intersection of behavioral health and the law. The system itself involves various entities that have a touchpoint to people who are involved with the criminal court system and may have a behavioral health condition.

Choosing a career as a practitioner in this human services field offers many diverse work environments. Examples include working with law enforcement in co-responder roles or in a corrections setting; in inpatient settings such as state psychiatric facilities and behavioral health and treatment centers; and in community settings such as outpatient competency restoration programs, or community behavioral health agencies. Service providers in this field often interact with legal partners such as lawyers and judges, corrections officers, and first responders.

For more information

Behavioral Health and Habilitation Administration, OFMHS
www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/office-forensic-mental-health-services

Workforce Development Administrator
Leah Henley | Leah.henley1@dshs.wa.gov
https://www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/office-forensic-mental-health-services/workforce-development

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Forensic Behavioral Health Career Path

Behavioral Health and Habilitation Administration
Office of Forensic Mental Health Services

DSHS
WASHINGTON STATE
Department of Social and Health Services

Examples of Work Environments

Typical work environments for forensic nurses include community settings such as outpatient competency restoration facilities, or with behavioral health organizations. Nurses also often work in inpatient settings such state or private behavioral health hospitals, correctional settings, and residential treatment facilities.

Education

Becoming a registered nurse in Washington requires graduation from an approved nursing program and licensure. Becoming an advanced nurse practitioner requires a master's degree or above from an approved program, post-graduate experience, and licensure. See Washington Administrative Code 246-840 for more information.

This document is for illustrative purposes only.
For detailed information see: Chapter 246-840 WAC

Begin

Bachelor's degree from a board-approved registered nurse program

Associate's degree from a board approved registered nurse program

Master's degree in nursing or doctor of nursing practice from a program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing or Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education

Registered Nurse Path

Advanced Nurse Practitioner Path

Successfully pass the commission approved licensure examination and provide program attestation (WAC 246-840-050)

Complete 125 hours of advanced clinical practice following graduation (per WAC 246-840-342), not to exceed 1,000 hours

Registered Nurse

Advanced Nurse Practitioner

Schools in Washington

RN Programs (Associates) • Community College

Over 22 Community and Technological Colleges in Washington state have RN Programs

RN Programs (Bachelors-BSN)

At least 11 colleges and universities in Washington State have BSN Programs

Masters Programs

There are six Masters of Science in Nursing programs in Washington State

For a full list of approved RN, BSN, and MSN programs in Washington please go to:

https://nursing.wa.gov/

Resource-DOH WA State Board of Nursing

New Opportunities