



TOP 5 RELOCATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR NURSES

There are more than 3 million registered nurses practicing in the United States, this is according to Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This number makes up the largest segment of the healthcare workforce in the US, and one of the most rapidly-growing occupations in the country. These healthcare professionals are at the forefront in every clinical setting – working for long hours, providing optimal patient care which includes medical treatment and monitoring their recovery. The job growth outlook over the next decade is predicted to increase by 16%, much faster than average, and the number of available skilled nurses is not keeping up with this growth.

The reason for this crisis is the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. The current number of Americans over the age of 65 is higher than it has ever been in the US history. This implies that by 2030, the population of senior citizens will increase by 75 percent to 69 million, one in every five American citizens will be aged 65 years and older (Grant, 2016).

Note that as the population ages, the demand for healthcare services will rise. National Council on Aging (2016) states that about 80 percent of older adults have at least one chronic disease, and 68 percent have at least two, a significant burden on the healthcare systems. With all these in mind, clearly there is a high demand for nurses across the country. Hospitals, nursing homes, among other healthcare facilities could now be offering competitive salaries to attract the best qualified and skilled nurses. Below are leading 5 states offering the highest pay for RNs, according to BLS.

1. Salary

If you're considering a relocation, perhaps moving to one of these states would be ideal:

CALIFORNIA: California is home to approximately 253,300 earning a salary much higher than the national average. BLS reported registered nurses earned an average of \$47.31 in May 2014, translating to \$98,400 annually. Note that the leading 10 highest-paying metropolitan areas in the US are in California. The top five are tabled below:

Metropolitan Area	Average Annual Salary
San Francisco	\$128,190
Santa Cruz	\$123,070
Oakland-Fremont	\$122,750
San Jose	\$121,820
Vallejo-Fairfield	\$114,290

HAWAII: Besides Hawaii's high pay, nurses enjoy sandy beaches and great surfing. In May 2014, Hawaii's 10,600 RNs earned an average hourly rate of \$42.42, a total annual pay of \$88,230. Honolulu, Hawaii's best metropolitan area, nurses earned even higher, \$90,260 annually the same year.

MASSACHUSETTS: BLS reported that RNs earned an average of \$41.23, \$85,770 annually in May 2014. The region has approximately 80,000 nurses, wherein Boston-Cambridge metropolitan area, nurses earned even higher stakes, \$90,880 annually.

ALASKA: Alaska has the least number of registered nurses, totalling about 5,780 in 2014. However, they ranked fourth with nurses earning an average hourly rate of \$41.22, or \$85,740 annually. Nurses in Fairbanks metropolitan area earned higher, at \$93,600 annually, as BLS reported.

NEW JERSEY: New Jersey has approximately 74,730 registered nurses with an average hourly rate of \$36.05, or \$74,990 annually by May 2009. New Jersey's Newark metropolitan area, nurses' average annual pay is slightly higher, at \$77,970.



2. Licensing

The National Council State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) requires all states to have its own licensure of nurses working in the states. Each state has specific licensure information available on board of nursing websites for nurses applying for licenses. All nurses relocating to any state are required to secure a license for the particular state, a process which takes anything from 2 weeks to 2 months. All nurses applying for a license are required to pass an examination that measures the candidate's competencies needed to perform various roles safely and effectively at the state's healthcare facilities. All US boards of nursing use the National Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) and National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN).

3. Unions

Salaries are higher in places with strong unions. Stronger unions imply that nurses can easily advocate for themselves and demand salary increments and better social protection in their jobs. However, for these unions to be effective, they need to understand the nursing practice in the sense that they can unite nurses, speak for nurses and make their voices heard, and not just asking for greater rewards.

4. Staying in Network

Staying in network with your current hospital helps nurses in building a professional network that brings career advancement in the long run. There are limitless opportunities that can present themselves through the network. For instance, your current hospital can organize annual conferences which you can attend. Attending such a conference even after you relocate makes you get involved and engaged with your like-minded colleagues whom you share ambitions and struggles. This will easily give you an insight on how nursing is changing, and the skills and education needed to advance your career. However, before investing time in attending any professional society, it is crucial to find if it meets your needs.

5. Relocation Assistance

Most hiring hospitals offer relocation assistance for qualified and experienced nurses who relocate to their hospitals. This assistance is provided to qualified and skilled nurses relocating locally or regionally. In most cases, this relocation assistance is paid as a lump sum reimbursement of relocation expenses incurred when moving to that particular state. It is important, during the relocation process, to keep receipts from your airfares, moving costs, medical costs, accommodation costs, among any other incidental relocation costs incurred during this period. The receipts will be needed when making the reimbursement.