



October 20, 2020

LTC/AL OPERATORS  
Province-wide

Dear Operator:

On September 9, 2020, the Government of British Columbia announced **The Health Career Access Program (HCAP)** to increase the supply of Health Care Assistants (HCAs) in B.C. and provide employment opportunities in the health sector. HCAP provides an opportunity for individuals to begin employment in a non-direct care role (the Health Care Support Worker, HCSW) and receive paid employer-sponsored training leading to a provincially recognized Health Care Assistant (HCA) credential.

Through HCAP, employers can participate in an innovative strategy to address recruitment challenges in the long-term care sector and build an engaged workforce. There is no fee or cost levied on organizations that choose to take part. Employee wages, benefits and education costs will be fully covered by the Government of British Columbia.

All long-term care and assisted living operators (including health authority owned and operated, affiliated, and private) providing care to seniors in B.C. that employ registered HCAs are invited to participate in this phase of the program.

Employers can express their interest by completing an Employer Expression of Interest (EEOI) form at <https://hcapemployers.gov.bc.ca/>. The form will be open until November 3, 2020.

The EEOI is a way for employers to indicate their interest in the HCAP. In no way does it commit the employer to participation. Frequently Asked Questions have been included below to provide further detail about the program.

**Please note that the terms and conditions of employment for the new Health Care Support Worker role that is being introduced with HCAP are currently under negotiation. These positions are not to be posted without further direction from the Ministry of Health.**

If you have questions concerning the HCAP you can contact the project team at the Ministry of Health via [HCAPInfoQuery@gov.bc.ca](mailto:HCAPInfoQuery@gov.bc.ca).

Mark Armitage MPA BSW

Assistant Deputy Minister

Health Sector Workforce and Beneficiary Services Division | Ministry of Health



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the Health Career Access Program (HCAP)?

The Health Career Access Program (HCAP) is designed in large part to increase the Health Care Assistant workforce in B.C. The HCAP education and training program will take approximately 12-16 months to complete. HCAP provides an opportunity for individuals to begin employment as Health Care Support Workers (HCSWs) and receive paid employer-sponsored training leading to a provincially recognized Health Care Assistant (HCA) credential.

The HCAP has been designed to meet several high-priority goals in the B.C. Health Sector and in the province more generally:

- Increase staffing of health care assistants at long-term care and assisted living sites providing care to seniors in BC.
- Support the COVID-19 response at long-term care and assisted living sites by staffing critical non-clinical non-direct care roles to assist residents and staff.
- Support BC's economic recovery efforts by offering employment in long-term care, assisted living sites and across the province.
- Reduce the barriers to entry into health care careers by providing applicants with an opportunity to train to become HCAs while receiving a guaranteed income.

### 2. Where can I go to find out more about the HCAP?

Employee Information and Expression of Interest landing page:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/work-in-health-care>

Employer Information and Expression of Interest landing page: <https://hcapemployers.gov.bc.ca/>

### 3. What positions are available through the HCAP?

**Health Care Support Worker:** The Health Care Support Worker (HCSW) position is a new /temporary non-clinical role. HCSWs will complete a modularized HCA training program over the approximate 12-month HCAP. Following completion of the HCA training program, the employee will be eligible to register with the BC HCA Registry and become employed as a Health Care Assistant.

The HCSW role delivers non-clinical, non-direct care supports to clients and residents. HCSWs are supervised by registered nurses or other health care professionals. Typical duties include:

- Establishing a caring relationship with residents and their families,
- Providing support and assistance with recreational activities,
- Assisting and directing visitors,
- Restocking supplies and performing housekeeping tasks, and
- Providing support and assistance at mealtimes.



A provincial benchmark and job description for this role is under development.

While employed as a Health Care Support Worker, HCAP participants will be enrolled in a modular Health Care Assistant (HCA) training program at a post-secondary institution. Upon successful completion of the HCA program, HCAP participants will be eligible to register with the BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry and seek work as a qualified HCA.

#### 4. Will HCAP employees be unionized?

If the setting has a union certification for the work performed by an HCSW, the role will be unionized.

The HCSW position is temporary; it is an interim position while the employee completes education and training requirements for an HCA role. It is expected that HCSWs will apply on vacant HCA positions on completion of their training and fully qualifying as an HCA.

#### 5. Who is eligible to become an HCAP employee?

Anyone who meets the basic qualifications is invited to apply; including internal staff who may be working in non-direct care roles, internationally educated nurses who have not had their qualifications recognized, and individuals with no health sector experience.

Interested applicants should apply through the provincial expression of interest, or through an internal job posting if one is available in your long-term care or assisted living site.

Entry requirements for the Health Care Support Worker (HCSW) position are based on the minimum qualifications to register with the BC HCA Registry.

##### **Education**

- Grade 10, including the successful completion of English 10, or equivalency
- For guidance on the English Language Competency Requirement please visit this [link](#)

##### **Skills**

- Ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing
- Ability to establish and maintain relationships with clients, residents and coworkers
- Ability to work independently and in cooperation with others
- Physical ability to carry out the duties of the position
- Ability to operate related equipment

#### 6. What employers are eligible to participate in the HCAP?

All long-term care and assisted living Operators (including health authority owned and operated, affiliated and private) providing care to seniors in B.C. and who employ registered HCAs are invited to participate in this phase of the Health Career Access Program.



## 7. What are the benefits to employers who participate in the HCAP?

Health Career Access Program (HCAP)-participating employers will receive:

- Funding for salaries for non-clinical, non-direct care Health Care Support Workers (HCSW) who will provide support to residents as part of the multidisciplinary team.
- A provincially standardized HCSW training and onboarding package.
- Tuition costs for the HCA program delivered at a public post-secondary is approximately \$4000. The Ministry of Health will cover the costs of the tuition, books and other required supplies for each HCAP employee.
- The opportunity to engage in an innovative strategy to address recruitment challenges in the long-term care sector and build an engaged workforce.

There is no fee or cost levied on organizations who choose to take part in the HCAP. Employee wages and benefits will be fully covered by the Government of British Columbia.

## 8. What are the Employer obligations in taking part in the HCAP program?

This is a new initiative and requires an employer commitment of approximately 12-16 months for each Health Care Support Worker (HCSW) hired. During this period:

- Employers will be responsible for providing appropriate oversight to the HCSW during their progression through the Health Care Assistant (HCA) program.
- Employers must provide time off for the HCSW to complete their educational program.
- Standard duties and practices associated with hiring HCSW employees are the responsibility of the employer.
- Employers must be prepared to offer employment to HCSWs who successfully complete the education and training for an HCA and are registered in the BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry (CACHR).

Employers will be required to provide specific information and data throughout the program including human resources data as necessary to ensure program success. Examples may include:

- Hiring dates for new HCSWs
- Hours worked by HCSWs
- Progression of HCSWs through the education process
- Status of vacancies at the site where the HCSW is training
- Number of HCA positions filled upon completion of the HCAP program

The data will be used to measure the success of the initiative, track the employment status of individuals in the HCSW role and to distribute funding. Further detail on the required data elements will be communicated as the initiative rolls out.



#### 9. Why are you asking for workforce baseline and vacancies at the site level?

Baseline staffing and vacancy data will help inform the allocation of HCSW positions across the province. To ensure that we are achieving program objectives, resources may be allocated to sites and areas with the greatest staffing needs.

Vacancy information may also be used to support matching promising candidates from the provincial expression of interest that launched on September 9 with non-HCAP vacancies (including food service, housekeeping, and administrative roles). The HCAP project team will connect with operators in coming weeks regarding the opportunity to recruit for non-HCAP vacancies from the pre-screened pool.

#### 10. What is the Expression of Interest (EOI) that was launched on September 9, 2020?

On September 9, Government announced the Health Career Access Program and launched a provincial process for individuals to express interest in participating (<http://gov.bc.ca/careersinhealth>).

To date, the Ministry has received a very significant response from British Columbians in every region of the province. Through a service contractor, we are now reaching out to potential participants to confirm their interest, collect additional information, and create a consolidated list of interested participants.

Once any internal posting requirements have been satisfied, employers that have been approved to hire one or more HCSWs through HCAP will need to recruit through the consolidated list of interested participants referred to above. As with any new hire, employers will be responsible for candidate interviews and other standard candidate vetting and assessment processes.

#### 11. How do the Single Site Orders impact this initiative?

All COVID-19 provincial policies and guidelines apply to Health Care Support Worker positions, including the Single Site Orders.

#### 12. Who do I contact with additional questions?

Employers with questions about the Expression of Interest process or form should contact the Health Career Access Program Project Team at the Ministry of Health ([HCAPInfoQuery@gov.bc.ca](mailto:HCAPInfoQuery@gov.bc.ca)).

## HCAP Process for Employers

### Step 1: Employer Expression of Interest

- The Employer Expression of Interest (EOI) web-form will be available beginning October 20, 2020 at <https://hcapemployers.gov.bc.ca/>. The site will close on November 3, 2020.
- Employers with multiple sites must submit one EOI form for each site that is interested in participating. EOI forms will be collated and forwarded to the relevant regional health authority.



- All long-term care and assisted living Operators (including health authority owned and operated, affiliated and private) providing care to seniors in B.C. and who employ registered HCAs are invited to participate in this phase of the Health Career Access Program.

#### Step 2: Allocation and Program Requirements Confirmed

- Interested employers will be contacted to confirm details of deliverables, allocation of FTEs, details of funding flow, and timeframes.

#### Step 3: Matching and Hiring

- Qualified candidates from the pool will be referred to the HCAP employer as the end-result of a provincial expression of interest process.
- A provincially standardized job description will be provided to each Employer.
- Employers with unionized health care staff are expected to follow all internal posting processes under the applicable collective agreement before moving to an external candidate from the HCAP candidate pool.
- Employers will ensure that successful applicants sign the template return of service agreement.

#### Step 4: Orientation and HCSW Training

- HCSWs will receive orientation and onboarding that includes standardized provincial content.
- Employers will set the work schedule for the HCSW, which could include weekends, evenings, nights, and statutory holidays; depending on the needs of the organization.
- All HCSW positions in long-term care and assisted living settings are full-time.
- An expansion to home support is being considered at this time. Under the Community Bargaining Association collective agreement, HCSW positions will be guaranteed the hours set out in the Memorandum of Agreement re: Health Careers Access Program Health Care Support Worker Terms of Employment.

#### Step 5: HCA Modularized Training Program

- Employees will take part in the modularized HCA training program (the “Training Program”), delivered through an acknowledged post-secondary institution (PSI). The Training Program is targeted to begin in January 2021 for the early adopter cohort of HCSWs hired in late-2020.
- Though the HCAP is a work-integrated learning program, the employee’s work as an HCSW is distinct from their training as an HCA and HCSWs shall not perform any of the independent/non-supervised clinical or direct-care duties of an HCA while employed as an HCSW. HCSWs will, however, be called upon to perform supervised clinical and direct care duties during formal practicum placements associated with the Training Program.
- The Training Program will be aligned with the BC HCA provincial curriculum and will be delivered in a cohort-based format by public PSIs over the course of 12-16 months.
  - Learners will be required to complete classroom learning (online) as well as in-person lab components and clinical instructor-led practice education.



- Clinical practicum requirements in the HCA program include multi-level or complex care (210 hours) as well as a home support/ assisted living/ group home setting (60 hours).

#### Step 6: Return of Service and HCA Registration

- HCSWs will be required to sign a return of service agreement in recognition of the educational investment.
- HCSWs who successfully complete the Training Program must register with the BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry (CACHR) upon completion.
- HCSWs who do not successfully complete the Training Program will be required to repay a prorated portion of their tuition and education stipend.
- Graduates of the Training Program are expected to apply on vacant HCA positions (casual, full-time, and part-time) with their current employer or, if no vacancies exist with their current employer, they are expected to seek employment with other long-term care and assisted living employers in B.C.
- Employers who have hired HCSWs are expected to offer vacant positions (casual, full-time, and part-time) to HCSWs who have successfully completed their program, in accordance with any internal posting processes set out in the governing collective agreement. If no full-time or part-time vacancies are available to the HCSW, employers are expected to offer the HCSW a casual HCA/CHW position.