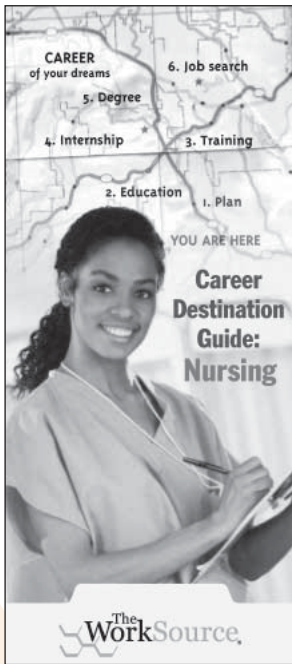


Current Health Care Initiatives



“When the Gulf Coast Workforce Board identified the health care industry as one of the 10 industries in the Gulf Coast region most in need of current and future employment assistance in 2000, it decided to find a way to help and make a difference. It asked the Greater Houston Partnership to join it in the effort by approaching CEOs of the region’s hospitals to find

out which of the many positions in their service systems was in the most critical condition. The answer was registered nurses.” – Gulf Coast Workforce Board *Work • Source* newsletter, 2001.

As the result of that initiative, a partnership was formed between the two organizations and the Health Service Steering Committee (HSSC) was formed. Together with hospital CEOs and their representatives, the committee has been working ever since to meet the challenge. The WorkSource has played a vital role in the work and accomplishments of this committee as members looked for solutions to the problem through marketing, education, work environment and legislative efforts.

Regionalizing Student Administrative Requirements in Schools of Nursing

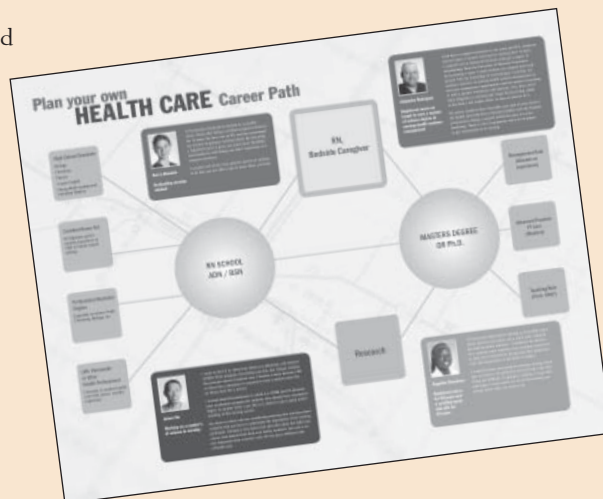
Recently, the HSSC has undertaken a new project to determine which student administrative services could be regionalized at a few nursing schools in the Gulf Coast area on behalf of all institutions that offer initial registered nurse (RN) licensure programs. By regionalizing certain functions, students would be able to apply for courses at different colleges or universities from a single location. This would also allow faculty members to reduce their administrative burdens and devote more quality time to teaching and research endeavors.

The HSSC’s Education Workgroup is shepherding the regionalization project. It has identified specific criteria that prospective nursing students must satisfy in order to be admitted to an academic program, as well as clinical skills that must be maintained throughout their academic careers in order to meet graduation and licensure requirements. The requirements most suited for possible regionalization include initial and periodic criminal background checks, initial and periodic screening for substance abuse, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification and special academic testing. Student support services are also being considered, as are personal and career counseling. These services would include financial aid; orientation for nursing as a career and a nursing career information center; an assessment and remediation center; and skills enhancement programs in English as a second language, medical terminology, critical thinking, time management, dosage calculation and math.

Career Destination Guide: Nursing

The WorkSource has recently developed an all-inclusive, detailed “roadmap” for individuals seeking information on how to become a nurse, on nursing career options and salaries, and on what colleges and universities offer RN programs in the Gulf Coast region. The map will be used primarily to educate students, parents, and high school and employment counselors. Included in the guide are testimonials from practicing nurses in the area who tell why they chose this exciting and rewarding career.

For more information on The WorkSource health services initiatives, contact Dan Brogdon, health services industry liaison at dan.brogdon@theworksource.org or 713.499.6651.



The WorkSource Helps Area Homeless



The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has undertaken a special research project to investigate how to blend additional services for the homeless with the regular operation of one of The WorkSource’s local career offices. SEARCH, a nationally-recognized 15-year provider of homeless services, operates the office – known as The WorkSource–Midtown at 2505 Fannin in Houston.

In 2005, the Coalition for the Homeless identified between 12,000–14,000 Harris County residents as homeless on any given day. The Coalition’s local survey identified job loss as the primary reason for loss of permanent housing and the number one reason for homelessness. An evaluation of the nation’s workforce system in 2004 noted that one-stop career offices are valuable assets in addressing homelessness, providing not only the means to go back to work, but also links to housing, medical, social service and income supports.

The Board has supported service for the homeless in past years, primarily through contracts for job training. As part of building a completely integrated workforce service system in the Houston-Galveston area, the Board is testing how it might integrate service usually found in homeless agencies (showers and laundry, food, postal service, voice mail) with the array of workforce services found in a career office. SEARCH is adding additional resources to the money provided by the Board for this special project.

The Board has been proud of its unique relationship with the homeless service network in the Houston-Galveston area and hopes the project will serve as a model for other workforce boards and communities.