

MA Career Ladder Program (CLP):

CLP Applicant Frequently Asked Questions

I. General

1. What does “direct-care worker” mean?

To participate in the CLP or CLPrep, you must currently be employed as a full-time Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) or other direct care worker. Direct care workers assist clients with various daily living activities such as bathing, dressing, eating and other support tasks (e.g. checking blood pressure readings) depending on the setting. These workers may have a variety of names and titles, including but not limited to: home health and home care aides, nurse aides, nursing assistants, personal care aides, and attendants. Please [click here](#) to see the full eligibility criteria.

2. Should I participate in the CLPrep or CLP?

To participate in the CLP, you must be accepted to at least one eligible LPN program for the current admissions cycle

The CLPrep is designed for candidates who are not ready for an LPN program in the current admissions cycle, such as needing additional academic and/or admissions support to be a competitive LPN applicant within a year. For example, this may look like needing to complete prerequisites, or work on your English and Math skills.

3. What application form should I complete?

Whether you are considering CLP or CLPrep, you should complete the same Career Ladder Program application ([click here to apply](#)). You will be recommended to either the CLPrep or CLP based on 1) your responses and 2) your screening and assessment results with JVS Boston.

Submissions are reviewed on a rolling basis so we recommend completing the application as soon as possible.

4. What does the JVS screening and assessment involve?

After submitting the Career Ladder Program application, you will need to complete a free screening and assessment with JVS Boston prior to participating in the CLP or the CLPrep.

The JVS screening and assessment is designed to determine whether you currently possess the core skills necessary to be successful in an LPN program and are thus a good fit for either CLP or CLPrep. JVS assesses two main components: 1) academic skill level (English and Math), and 2) personal situation.

5. Does the Career Ladder Program provide financial assistance for my prerequisite courses?

You must fill out the appropriate Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form (see Question 6 below) to take advantage of any applicable federal aid. Filling out the FAFSA also allows you to be considered for MassReconnect (see eligibility requirements for [MassReconnect here](#)), which covers tuition and fees for eligible participants and includes an allowance for books and supplies.

The Career Ladder Program may provide financial assistance for prerequisite classes up to a maximum amount per student as necessary and subject to the availability of funds.

6. Which FAFSA form should I fill out?

You should fill out the appropriate FAFSA form for federal aid coverage (if applicable) that corresponds to the dates when you will be enrolled in classes. For example:

- If taking prerequisites in Summer 2025: complete the [FY 24-25 FAFSA form](#) before June 30, 2025.
- If taking prerequisites or courses between September 2025 and August 2026: complete [FY 25-26 FAFSA form](#).

For support completing your FAFSA form:

- Your LPN program of interest may have an admissions counselor who can help answer specific questions. See below for direct links to eligible LPN programs.
- Contact [MassEdCo online](#) or in-person (call for an appointment) in Metro Boston.

7. Which LPN programs are eligible for the Career Ladder program?

The following Massachusetts community colleges and Vocational Technical schools offer approved LPN programs. Click the links below to explore each school's specific Admissions requirements.

All schools except for Mount Wachusett Community College have a May deadline for priority Fall admission (September).

Community Colleges:

- [Berkshire Community College](#) (1350 West Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201)
- [Greenfield Community College](#) (80 Locust St. Northampton, MA 01060)
- [Holyoke Community College](#) (Homestead Avenue, Holyoke, MA 01040)
- [Massachusetts Bay Community College](#) (490 Franklin St, Framingham, MA 01702)
- [Mount Wachusett Community College](#) (College 444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440)
 - Note: this is the only school with a Spring admission (January). The application deadline is September 1st.
- [North Shore Community College](#) (1 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923)
- [Northern Essex Community College](#) (414 Common Street, Lawrence, MA 01840)
- [Quinsigamond Community College](#) (670 West Boylston Street, Worcester, MA 01606)

Vocational Technical Schools

- [Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical School](#) (220 Sandwich Rd, Bourne, MA 02532)
- [Southeastern Technical Institute](#) (250 Foundry St South Easton, MA 02375)

8. What is the TEAS exam?

The TEAS, or [Test of Essential Academic Skills](#), is a standardized exam that assesses a nursing student's academic potential in nursing school. The TEAS exam consists of four general subjects: 1) Reading, 2) Math, 3) Science, and 4) English Language Usage.

Each LPN program has its own minimum score requirement for the TEAS, or might not even require the TEAS, so we recommend looking at each school's website for specific guidance.

9. What are prerequisites?

Each LPN program has its own prerequisite courses, so please reach out to the admissions counselor at the specific school you are interested in and/or visit the school's website to learn more about the school's policies. Most LPN programs require that you complete your prerequisites prior to applying to the LPN program. In those cases, applications are not considered complete without prerequisites. Equivalent courses you have taken in the past may be transferrable. Refer to the [Participant Guide to LPN Admissions](#) for additional information. Please note that the Vocational Technical Schools do not require prerequisite courses as part of the application process.

10. Can prerequisites be taken online?

This is dependent on the individual prerequisite requirements of each LPN program and the availability of courses delivered online. If a program has a lab requirement, that is typically only offered in person. Where possible, we recommend taking prerequisites through the school where you hope to enroll for your LPN program to ensure a smoother admissions experience.

11. What happens if I don't pass a prerequisite course with satisfactory scores?

You will need to retake the prerequisite to satisfy the LPN program's admissions requirements. We recommend connecting with JVS Boston early if you continue to have difficulty with a prerequisite course.

II. Career Ladder Preparatory Program ("CLPrep")

12. Does participating in the CLPrep guarantee me a spot in CLP? Do I need to re-apply to the CLP?

The CLPrep supports you in completing admissions requirements for eligible LPN programs. We believe that the CLPrep will help you submit a stronger application with a higher chance for acceptance into an LPN program, but this does not guarantee your acceptance.

You must be accepted into an LPN program to be eligible for the CLP.

At this time, to participate in the CLP after gaining acceptance into an LPN program, you will not need to fill out another Career Ladder Program application form. Instead, you will complete a few more steps to finalize your CLP participation, which include entering into a contract with your employer to commit to employment as a full-time LPN for at least four (4) years.

13. What do the different CLPrep tiers mean?

There are two CLPrep tiers: I) General Admissions Support, and II) Full Support. The main difference between the two tiers is access on an as-needed basis to an online readiness class for nine hours per week (for up to 1 year). This class focuses on English language skills and other academic skills to help you prepare for the LPN program admission process and training.

14. Will I be financially responsible if I'm not able to finish any of the steps in the CLPrep?

If you're navigating academic or personal issues, we highly recommend reaching out to JVS Boston as early as possible so they can connect you with the appropriate resources.

You will not be responsible for paying back funds provided to you if you do not complete your prerequisites nor achieve a passing score on the TEAS exam. Please note that you are allowed three (3) total attempts on the TEAS exam at no cost to you. We recommend connecting with JVS Boston early if you continue to have difficulty navigating the TEAS exam.

III. Career Ladder Program ("CLP")

15. What is the CLP Advance Payment?

The CLP Advance Payment is designed to help offset your living costs while you are working on a reduced schedule during your LPN studies, at \$440 per week (pre-tax) throughout the standard duration of your LPN program (typically 10 months).

You will receive the CLP Advance Payment in equal installments from your employer according to your employer's payroll schedule, minus any federal/state taxes, during your participation in the CLP.

The CLP Advance Payment will be considered "fully earned" *only* when you have worked with your employer as a full-time LPN for at least four (4) years. If you leave your employer voluntarily or are terminated for cause by your employer before the end of the 4-year period, your CLP Advance Payment will not be considered fully earned. You must then repay the unearned portion of the total CLP Advance Payment disbursed to you.

See Question 22 below for more detail.

16. How long should I expect to receive the CLP Advance Payment?

You can receive this CLP Advance Payment throughout the standard duration of your LPN program (typically 10 months). Advance Payments only occur once you have begun your LPN studies, not while you are completing prerequisites.

17. Will I be paying taxes on this CLP Advance Payment?

Your CLP Advance Payment will go through your regular payroll with regular payroll tax withholding (federal and state taxes).

Note: This information is provided for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as tax advice. Please consult with a professional tax advisor regarding your specific circumstances.

18. Are some of the courses available online?

This depends on the individual LPN program.

19. What happens if I am unable to complete my LPN studies due to an unforeseen medical issues, or some other reason outside of my control?

Throughout your LPN studies, you will have weekly one-on-one virtual sessions with a JVS Boston coach who can help you navigate any academic or personal issues. We highly recommend reaching out to them as early as possible so they can provide you with appropriate resources.

You may be granted a temporary leave, consistent with the policies of your employing organization, if you must interrupt your LPN studies because of a personal or immediate family illness or another emergency situation. You must notify JVS Boston and your employer of any interruption, in writing, via email within 14 days. In rare instances, the CLP may agree to suspend your service commitment if completing it becomes impossible or would involve an extreme hardship and you become permanently unable to meet the service commitment.

If you permanently withdraw from your LPN program, you will stop receiving the CLP Advance Payment and will be responsible for paying back the full amount of the CLP Advance Payment you have received at the time of your withdrawal. If you need to take a leave of absence, your CLP Advance Payment installments will pause and you will be expected to resume full-time hours with your employer. In the case that you return within an agreed upon timeframe, you may resume receiving the CLP Advance Payment. If you do not return, you will be responsible for repaying the full amount of the CLP Advance Payment you received to date.

20. What happens if I do not pass the NCLEX-PN exam (exam to obtain LPN license)?

You are allowed three (3) total attempts on the NCLEX-PN exam at no cost to you. We recommend connecting with JVS Boston early if you are concerned about the NCLEX-PN exam.

21. What if my employer does not have an open LPN position for me after I obtain my LPN license?

Employers participating in the Career Ladder Program commit to providing you with a full-time LPN offer after you have successfully obtained your LPN license. You are not financially responsible if your employer does not meet this commitment.

22. What happens if I do not return with my employer as a full-time LPN after obtaining my LPN license, or if I don't stay for at least 4 years?

If you choose not to return to your employer after obtaining your LPN license, you will be responsible for repaying the full CLP Advance Payment amount received.

The CLP Advance Payment will be considered “fully earned” only when you have worked with your employer as a full-time LPN for four (4) years. If you leave voluntarily or are terminated for cause by your employer before the end of the 4-year period, your CLP Advance Payment will not be considered fully earned. You must then repay the unearned portion of the total CLP Advance Payment disbursed to you.

The amount of the CLP Advance Payment you have earned, and the amount of the repayment to the employer by you, is calculated based on the number of months into this 4-year period at which you leave your employer. See the table and examples below.

Time of Separation from Your Employer	Percent of Total CLP Advance Payment Due
Under 12 months	100%
12 or more months; less than 24 months	75%
24 or more months; less than 36 months	50%
36 or more months; less than 48 months	25%

Example 1

- You just obtained your LPN license and returned to your employer as a new full-time LPN in June 2025. June counts as Month 0.
- You decided to leave your employer in August 2026 (Month 14).
- You would then need to repay 75% of the total CLP Advance Payment.
 - However, if you left in July 2029 (more than 48 months, or 4 years after June 2025), you would repay nothing, or owe 0% of the total CLP Advance Payment.

Example 2

- You just obtained your LPN license and choose **to not** return to your employer as a new full-time LPN.
- You are thus separated from your employer in Month 0 of this 4-year period, so you will owe 100% of the total CLP Advance Payment.