

MA Career Ladder Program (CLP): CLP Applicant Frequently Asked Questions

I. General

1. Which program is right for me: CLPrep or CLP?

Individuals who participate in these programs will receive support navigating the requirements to transition from a Certified Nursing Assistant or other direct care worker to a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN).

CLPrep provides benefits such as:

- CLP Advance Payments of \$440 per week (pre-tax) to help cover living costs throughout the standard duration of the LPN program (approximately 10 months).
- Access to weekly one-on-one coaching and other supports with JVS Boston, a nonprofit supportive services provider.
- Coverage of the NCLEX-PN exam fee (\$200) and LPN license registration (\$230).

CLP provides benefits such as...

- A CLPrep online readiness class nine hours per week (for up to 1 year) that focuses on English language skills and other academic skills to help you prepare for the LPN program admissions process and training;
- Assistance with navigating admissions requirements (prerequisite courses, TEAS exam etc.), class registration, and financial aid applications;
- Coverage of the TEAS exam fee (\$106); and
- Financial assistance for prerequisite classes up to a maximum amount per student, as necessary and subject to the availability of funds.

2. What are the requirements to participate in CLPrep and CLP?

To participate in CLP, you must be accepted to at least one eligible LPN program for the current admissions cycle and currently employed as a full-time CNA or other direct care worker.

CLPrep is designed for candidates who are not yet ready for an LPN program in the current admissions cycle, such as those who need additional academic and/or admissions support to become competitive LPN applicants. The course is designed to take approximately 3 months, and depending on where a participant is in their LPN journey, it can take up to 2 years to become enrolled in an LPN program. For example, this may mean completing prerequisites and getting help preparing for the entrance exam (TEAS or NLN) through the CLPrep class.

3. How do I apply for CLPrep or CLP?

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 CLPrep or CLP based on 1) your responses and 2) your screening and assessment results with the Massachusetts Senior Care Association (MSCA).

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

4. What does “direct care worker” mean?

To participate in 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 daily living activities, such as bathing, dressing, and eating, as well as other support tasks (e.g., checking blood pressure), 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. If you are unsure if your role qualifies, please reach out to careerladderprogram@maseniorcare.org

5. What does the MSCA screening and assessment involve?

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

The MSCA 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. MSCA assesses two main components: 1) academic skill level (English, Math, and Science), and 2) readiness and ability to begin a full-time LPN program.

6. 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. Completing the FAFSA also makes you eligible for MassEducate (see eligibility requirements [here](#)), which may cover tuition and fees for eligible participants and includes an allowance for books and supplies.

Students are strongly encouraged to enroll in prerequisites at a local community college and to take six or more credits during their prerequisites to be covered by MassEducate. In the case that students cannot secure funding to cover their prerequisites, CLP may provide financial assistance, subject to individual maximums and the availability of funds. *See the complete prerequisite policy [here](#).*

7. 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:

Updated: March 2026

- If taking prerequisites in Summer 2026: complete the [FY 25-26 FAFSA form](#) before June 30, 2026.
- If taking prerequisites or courses between September 2026 and August 2027: complete [FY 26-27 FAFSA form](#).

For support in 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.

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

All accredited Massachusetts LPN programs are considered eligible for the CLP. CLP only covers tuition and fees at the following Massachusetts community colleges and Vocational Technical schools. 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).

LPN programs where CLP covers tuition and fees:

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](#) (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 (VocTech)

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

9. Are there any other eligible LPN programs?

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Starting in 2026, all VocTech programs and Quincy College will qualify for CLP but will not be eligible for tuition assistance. If you enroll at an LPN program other than at a community college or Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical School or Southeastern Technical Institute, you must cover all tuition costs.

10. 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.

Some programs use a similar standardized entrance exam called the [NLN Nursing Entrance Exam](#) that consists of 3 sections: 1) Verbal Skills, 2) Math, and 3) Science.

11. What are prerequisites?

Each LPN program has its own prerequisite course requirements, 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 until the prerequisites are met. Equivalent courses you have taken in the past may be transferable. Refer to the [Participant Guide to LPN Admissions](#) for additional information. Please note that VocTechs generally do not require prerequisite courses as part of the application process.

12. Can prerequisites be taken online?

This depends on the individual prerequisites of each LPN program and the availability of online courses. If a program has a lab requirement, it is typically offered only in person. Where possible, we recommend completing prerequisites at the school where you plan to enroll in your LPN program to ensure a smoother admissions experience.

13. 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")

14. Does participating in CLPrep guarantee me a spot in CLP? Do I need to reapply to CLP?

CLPrep supports you in completing admissions requirements for eligible LPN programs. We believe that CLPrep will help you submit a stronger application and increase your chances of acceptance into an LPN program, but it does not guarantee acceptance.

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

At this time, to participate in CLP after gaining acceptance into an LPN program, you will not need to fill out another Career Ladder Program application form. To finalize your CLP participation, you will complete steps to enter into a contract with your employer to commit to two (2) years of full-time LPN employment post-licensure.

15. What do the different CLPrep groups mean?

There are multiple groupings of CLPrep:

General Admissions Support: which helps students who are further along in their journey navigate the admissions process.

CLPrep Class: A 3-month course for 9 hours a week on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9 AM to 12 PM, designed to help students pass the entrance exam (TEAS or NLN). The course covers English, Math, and Science questions to help students pass the exams. Your assessment scores determine eligibility for the CLPrep class; in some cases, students may be required to complete prerequisite courses or other academic preparations before enrolling. CLPrep class enrollment will be conducted quarterly.

CLPrep Prereq: Your assessment scores suggest you may need to complete required prerequisites before enrolling in the CLPrep class. JVS coaches will guide you through the prerequisite process and enrollment.

CLPrep Fundamental: Your assessment scores indicate that you need to build basic comprehension before enrolling in prerequisite courses or CLPrep Class. Your coach will give you materials for independent review to help you prepare. They will check in with you quarterly to evaluate your progress and decide when you are ready to begin the next phase of CLP.

16. Will I be financially responsible if I'm not able to finish any of the steps in 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 or if you do not achieve a passing score on the TEAS exam. Please note that you are allowed three 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. Please note that the program will only fund the TEAS or NLN exam fee if your JVS Boston instructor determines you are ready to take the test.

III. Career Ladder Program ("CLP")

17. What is CLP Advance Payment?

Updated: March 2026

CLP Advance Payments are 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). Please note that if you are enrolled in, or planning to enroll in, Quinsigamond Community College's Apprenticeship program, CLP Advanced Payment is \$352 per week (pre-tax) due to the program's longer duration.

You will receive 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 CLP.

CLP Advance Payment will be considered "fully earned" *only* when you have worked with your employer as a full-time LPN for at least two (2) years. If you leave your employer voluntarily or are terminated for cause by your employer before the end of the 2-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.

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

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

19. 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.

20. Are some of the LPN program courses available online?

This depends on the individual LPN program, so please consult the individual LPN program for more detail.

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

If you permanently withdraw from your LPN program, you will stop receiving CLP Advance Payments and will not be responsible for repaying any of the advance payments. 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. If you return within the agreed timeframe, you may resume receiving CLP Advance Payment. If you do not return, you will not be responsible for repaying any of the CLP Advance Payment you received to date.

22. 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 contacting JVS Boston early if you are concerned about the NCLEX-PN exam.

23. 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.

24. 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 2 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.

CLP Advance Payment will be considered “fully earned” only when you have worked with your employer as a full-time LPN for two (2) years. If you leave voluntarily or are terminated for cause by your employer before the end of the 2-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 CLP Advance Payment you have earned, and the amount you will have to repay the Company, shall be determined on the following scale based on the number of months following your promotion start date during which your separation from the Company takes place. The amount will be reduced by 1/24 of your total CLP Advance Payment per month that you stay with the Company. For example, if you received \$16,000 in total Advance Payments, the amount you owe would be reduced by \$667 per month that you stay with your employer. Please see the examples below:

Time of Separation from Your Employer	Percent of Total CLP Advance Payment Due
Right after Licensure	100%
6 Months	75%
12 months	50%
18 months	25%

24 months and beyond	0%
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Example 1

- You just obtained your LPN license and returned to your employer and started as a full-time LPN on June 1, 2025.
- You stay until the 2-year anniversary of your start date (June 1, 2027).
- Your obligation has been completed, and if you were to leave your employer, you would not be responsible for repayment.

Example 2

- You just obtained your LPN license and returned to your employer and started as a full-time LPN on June 1, 2025.
- You decided to leave your employer on June 1, 2026.

You would then need to repay 50% of the total CLP Advance Payment. You pay based on the number of months in the program you have completed.

Example 3

- You just obtained your LPN license and choose **not to** return to your employer as a new full-time LPN.
- You are thus separated from your employer and did not complete any months, so you will owe 100% of the total CLP Advance Payment.