



 **RIVERSIDE HEALTHCARE**

Nursing Career Ladder Program Guidebook

LAST REVISED MARCH 9, 2022

General Overview

Riverside Healthcare is an organization that provides career development opportunities to learn and grow. Our Nursing Career Ladder is designed to recognize nurses' contributions to Riverside and the nursing profession. The ladder is an incentive structure that encourages ongoing professional growth. Whether you are a new graduate nurse or experienced, the ladder provides relevant opportunities and rewards for you.

Patricia Benner's "Novice to Expert" professional nursing development model provides a conceptual framework for this ladder as described below.

1. **Advanced Beginners:** Nurses begin their professional careers as Advanced Beginners, demonstrating concrete thinking, and a focus on task accomplishment and individual aspects of patient care. For the purposes of this ladder, this is considered a **Career Nurse (CN) I**.
2. **Competent:** In the Competent stage, nurses demonstrate an expanded knowledge base and increasing ability to act independently, but still need support from nurses with more experience. This level is considered a **CN II** within this ladder.
3. **Proficient:** At this level, Proficient nurses are independent caregivers with sound decision making processes and serve as resources to other nurses. This level would be considered a **CN III** within this ladder.
4. **Expert:** Expert level nurses care for patients intuitively based on vast experience. This level is the highest rung currently on the ladder, a **CN IV**.

Ladder Overview and Definitions

Each level of the Nursing Career Ladder has activity requirements, with associated point ranges, across various categories. These categories are the Five Pillars that align with the global performance standards expected of all Riverside employees: **People, Service, Quality, Finance, and Growth**. Refer to the Nursing Career Ladder Grid Worksheet in this Guidebook for the specific activity options and point values.

- **CN I** – Nurse must earn **10-19 points across two categories** on the Nursing Career Ladder Grid.
- **CN II** - Nurse must earn **20-29 points across three categories** on the Nursing Career Ladder Grid.
- **CN III** - Nurse must earn **30-39 points across four categories** on the Nursing Career Ladder Grid. Minimum BSN or higher Nursing degree **or** national certification required.
- **CN IV** - Nurse must earn **greater than 40 points across all five categories** on the Nursing Career Ladder Grid. Minimum BSN or higher Nursing degree **and** national certification required.

Financial Incentives for Ladder Participation

Riverside Healthcare seeks to recognize and reward nurses for engaging in professional development, which thereby benefits our organization and the patients and families we serve. Financial incentives will be distributed as an annual cash payout that can be applied for and received once per calendar year. Amounts increase with each ladder level and are noted below.

- **CN I** – \$500
- **CN II** - \$1000
- **CN III** - \$1500
- **CN IV** - \$2000

Participation & Eligibility

The decision to pursue advancement beyond the entry level in nursing is an individual choice. Thus, participation in the Nursing Career Ladder Program is voluntary and flexible, allowing you to set and achieve goals as you choose.

The career ladder provides a one-time cash payout bonus based upon submitting documentation via qualifying criteria outlined in this guide.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Clinical registered nurses (RNs that spend greater than 51% of their time providing direct patient care) within Riverside Healthcare (RMC, RMG & Senior Life; includes both inpatient and outpatient areas):
 - 0.5 - 1.0 FTE
 - Must have worked within Riverside Healthcare for 6 months before application date.
 - Must be actively employed at Riverside at the time of application submission and acceptance into the Ladder program.
2. Advanced Practice RNs, Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), and salaried/exempt RNs are excluded from participating in the Nursing Career Ladder.
3. Must be in good standing and have no corrective action meeting or exceeding Written Warning on file in past 12 months to application submission date.
4. May only apply once per calendar year.
5. All participating nurses are expected to demonstrate the required elements as described in this packet to achieve the desired ladder level.
6. Application for a rung on the Career Ladder will be accepted twice a year. Completed application and all associated documentation is due during one of two windows - either **April 1st - April 30th** or **October 1st - October 31st** for review by Professional Development Council. Review and approval of Career Ladder documentation submissions will be completed and awards/denials made by **May 31st** and **November 30th**, respectively.

Process for Ladder Advancement

1. Moving up the Career Ladder is offered twice per year (applications and associated documentation are accepted between **April 1st - April 30th** or **October 1st - October 31st**); however, a nurse may only seek advancement once per calendar year.
2. The nurse applying is responsible for compiling all needed evidence and submitting the application and evidence to his/her Manager/Director for review and approval.
3. The Manager/Director reviews the materials for completeness and accuracy. If incomplete or inaccurate, the Manager/Director meets with the nurse for coaching and suggestions for a development plan. If complete and accurate, the Manager/Director forwards the application/evidence to the Organizational Development & Learning (ODL) Department for tracking applicants. The ODL Department will verify good standing with Human Resources at time of application.

4. The ODL Department forwards all complete and accurate packets to the Professional Development Council for final approval/denial for advancement.
 - If the Professional Development Council recommends moving up the Career Ladder, a congratulatory form letter is submitted to the applying nurse and his/her Manager/Director.
 - If the Professional Development Council recommends denial on the Career Ladder, a rationale is given to the applying nurse and his/her Manager/Director on the denial with suggestions for future development.
 - The Professional Development Council will track approvals/denials on a shared spreadsheet for reporting purposes. Completed and approved applications shall be retained on file in the ODL Department.

Process to Maintain Ladder Level

Once a level is attained, the nurse must work to maintain that level. If you would like to receive a cash payout each year, you are required to reapply each year.

If the nurse either fails to submit a complete, approved application and/or fails to achieve the required number of points to remain at his/her current level on the Career Ladder, the nurse will be ineligible for a cash payout for that calendar year.

Riverside Healthcare RN Career Ladder Grid Worksheet

People		Service		Quality		Finance		Growth	
Activity	My Points	Activity	My Points	Activity	My Points	Activity	My Points	Activity	My Points
1. Serves as a preceptor to a (select all): Student Nurse (1 point) Experienced Nurse (2 points) New Graduate Nurse (3 points)		1. DAISY (select all): Award Nominee (1 point) Award Winner (2 points)		1. Participates in the revision of an RHC policy. (1 point)		1. Meets requirements of the attendance and punctuality policy. (1 point)		1. Education (select all): Enrolled - BSN/MSN/DNP (1 point) Non-Nursing Bachelor's degree (1 point) BSN (2 points) Non-Nursing Master's degree (2 points) MSN (3 points) DNP/other terminal degree (4 points)	
2. Serves as a mentor to a new nurse. (3 points)		2. Tree-Mendous Nominee (2 points)		2. Participates in the development of a new RHC policy. (2 points)		2. Manages time well/avoids incremental overtime. (1 point)		2. Attends a conference outside of job requirements. (1 point)	
3. Validates competency of staff (i.e. Completes Annual Checklists, Master Trainer, Superuser, Champion, etc.). (1 point)		3. Nominated an RHC employee for an award (i.e. DAISY, Tree-Mendous, Butterfly Award, etc.). (1 point)		3. Informally disseminates literature/EBP/research from a CE event, professional organization, or conference at huddles, department meetings, etc. (1 point)		3. Serves as charge at least 30% shifts worked/flexes staffing to ensure fiscal responsibility. (2 points)		3. Shared Governance involvement (select one): Council Member (1 point) Chair/Co-Chair (2 points) Facilitator (3 points)	
4. Prepares and presents a health-related professional education program for RHC employees. (2 points)		4. Mentioned by name on a patient satisfaction survey for providing a remarkable healthcare experience. (2 points)		4. Actively participates in an RHC committee to improve patient care/quality outcomes (i.e. Falls Steering, unit-based councils, Sepsis, Chest Pain, Heart Failure, etc.). (1 point each; Maximum 3 points)		4. Submits narrative documenting participation in a unit-based project focused on retention with measurable outcomes. (2 points)		4. Annual Continuing Education (select one): 15 contact hours (1 points) 20 contact hours (2 points) 25 contact hours (3 points)	
5. Prepares and presents a health-related professional education program for community members. (3 points)		5. Submits narrative describing a situation where the nurse applied the Professional Practice Model to provide excellent service and care for a patient/family. (1 point)		5. Participates in an EBP or research project at RHC. (2 points)		5. Demonstrates flexibility by adjusting schedule/shifts to support unit needs. (2 points)		5. Professional organizations: Member (1 point; Maximum 3 points) Holds an office or serves on a committee (2 points)	
6. Participates in an RHC Leadership Development Program: Riverside's Young Professionals Emerging Leaders Leadership Excellence Program (3 points)		6. Volunteers at an RHC or community-sponsored event promoting health or recruitment. (1 point each; Maximum 3 points)		6. Poster or presentation at a conference outside of RHC. (3 points)		6. Participates in the Lean Certificate Program. (2 points)		6. Holds a professional certification recognized on the DDCT grid. (2 points each; Maximum 4 points)	
7. Serves as an instructor/faculty for an RHC-sponsored training program such as BLS, ACLS, PALS, NRP, CPI, etc. (2 points)		7. Years of Nursing service at RHC: 6 months - 2 years (1 point) 3 - 5 years (2 points) 6 - 10 years (3 points) 11 - 20 years (4 points) > 20 years (5 points)		7. Published in a professional journal. (3 points)		7. Presents an idea at Riverside Shark Tank. (2 points)		7. Obtains REACH Level 3. (2 points)	
8. Serves as a clinical nursing instructor/faculty for an accredited college degree program. (3 points)		8. Years of Nursing Experience: 3 - 5 years (1 point) 6 - 10 years (2 points) > 10 years (3 points)		8. Achieves and maintains current job-specific, competency-based certifications (i.e. BLS, ACLS, PALS, NRP, CPI, etc.). (1 point each; Maximum 3 points)		8. Submits narrative documenting participation in a RHC project with measurable financial outcomes. (3 points)		Attends continuing education events sponsored by Well in Mind. (1 each; Maximum 3 points)	
People Total		Service Total		Quality Total		Finance Total		Growth Total	
<i>Refer to Ladder Overview & Definitions for point values and requirements by level.</i>								Overall Total	

Career Ladder Evidence Requirements by Activity Category

People

1. **Serves as a preceptor** to a (select all):

- Student Nurse (1 point)
- Experienced Nurse (2 points)
- New Graduate Nurse (3 points)

Requirements: Must assume primary preceptor responsibility for entire orientation period (not just a few days or shifts) within the last 12 months. Is responsible for assuring all orientation documentation is completed.

For student nurse preceptors, a signed note from school instructor or Nursing Leader, including the student nurse's name and dates of preceptorship and/or copy of signed capstone documentation.

For experienced and new graduate nurses, a copy of the completed department orientation checklist must be submitted (contact ODL for assistance). For inpatient areas and Miller HealthCare, a signed copy of the Preceptor Roles, Responsibilities, and Requirements document is required (can be found as an attachment to the Inpatient Nurse Preceptor Program in Policy Stat) and applicant must have completed preceptor training in order to be eligible (contact ODL for assistance).

2. **Serves as a mentor** to a new nurse. (3 points)

Requirements: Must provide a signed copy of the Mentor Application and Agreement dated within the last 12 months. Contact ODL for assistance.

3. **Validates competency of staff** (i.e. Completes Annual Checklists, Master Trainer, Superuser, Champion, etc.). (1 point)

Requirements: Obtains note or evidence from nursing leader or ODL staff within the last 12 months verifying competency validation via formal review processes such as: Peer Review, Evaluator on electronic skills checklists, Annual Skills Day, etc.

4. Prepares and presents a **health-related professional education program for RHC employees**. (2 points)

Requirements: Provides content shared (i.e. PowerPoint presentation, brochure, flyer, and/or copy of evaluations) with a narrative description of the date, time, location, topic, and audience for the education provided within the last 12 months.

5. Prepares and presents a **health-related professional education program for community members.**
(3 points)

Requirements: Provides content shared (i.e. PowerPoint presentation, brochure, flyer, and/or copy of evaluations) with a narrative description of the date, time, location, sponsoring organization, topic, and audience for the education provided within the last 12 months.

6. Participates in and/or completes an **RHC Leadership Development Program:**

Riverside's Young Professionals
Emerging Leaders
Leadership Excellence Program
(3 points)

Requirements: Provides a certificate of program completion dated within the last 12 months. If involved in a program that is still in progress, provides an attendance report demonstrating consistent attendance and a note from the program facilitator verifying attendance and active participation within the last 12 months.

7. Serves as an **instructor/faculty for an RHC-sponsored training program** such as BLS, ACLS, PALS, NRP, CPI, etc. (2 points)

Requirements: Provides a copy of instructor card/certificate and an OLIE report noting instructor's class dates (contact ODL for assistance).

8. Serves as a clinical **nursing instructor/faculty for an accredited college degree program.** (3 points)

Requirements: Provides a letter or evidence from academic institution validating instructor/faculty status dated within the last 12 months.

Service

1. **DAISY** (select all):

Award Nominee (1 point)

Award Winner (2 points)

Requirements: Provides a copy of nomination. Contact Patient Care Services for assistance.

2. **Tree-Mendous** Nominee

(2 points)

Requirements: Provides a copy of nomination. Contact ODL for assistance.

3. **Nominated an RHC employee for an award** (i.e. DAISY, Tree-Mendous, Butterfly Award, etc.).

(1 point)

Requirements: Provides a copy of nomination (within the last 12 months), which needs to be at least one paragraph in length and describes specific example(s) of how the nominee demonstrated excellence. Contact Patient Care Services for assistance with DAISY and Butterfly. Contact ODL for assistance with Tree-Mendous.

4. **Mentioned by name on a patient satisfaction survey** for providing a remarkable healthcare experience. (2 points)

Requirements: Provides a copy of nomination (within the last 12 months). Contact ODL for assistance.

5. Submits narrative describing a situation where the nurse applied the **Professional Practice Model** to provide excellent service and care for a patient/family. (1 point)

Requirements: Narrative must be typed, at least one paragraph in length, and no longer than one page, describing a specific situation where the components of the Professional Practice Model were applied to provide excellent service.

6. Volunteers at an RHC or community-sponsored event promoting health/wellness or a recruitment event. (1 point each; Maximum 3 points)

Requirements: Narrative (one for each event) noting the date, time, sponsor, and event for volunteer service. Describe the recruitment and/or health/wellness event and how your participation promoted employment at Riverside or health/wellness. Provide a contact name and phone number for the event that can verify participation. Narrative must be typed and at least one paragraph in length.

7. Years of Nursing service at RHC:

6 months - 2 years (1 point)

3 - 5 years (2 points)

6 - 10 years (3 points)

11 - 20 years (4 points)

> 20 years (5 points)

Requirements: Note RN hire date and work history on Nursing Career Ladder Application.

8. Years of Nursing Experience:

3 - 5 years (1 point)

6 - 10 years (2 points)

> 10 years (3 points)

Requirements: Note work history (at RHC and elsewhere) on Nursing Career Ladder Application. Nursing experience is defined as RN and LPN work experience only.

Quality

1. Participates in the **revision of an RHC policy**.

(1 point)

Requirements: Provides a copy of the policy revised and approved within the last 12 months with a narrative description of the policy revision and evidence/research/rationale for policy revision.

2. Participates in the **development of a new RHC policy**.

(2 points)

Requirements: Provides a copy of the new policy developed and approved within the last 12 months with a narrative description of the evidence/research/rationale for policy.

3. **Informally disseminates literature/EBP/research** from a CE event, professional organization, or conference at huddles, department meetings, etc. (1 point)

Requirements: Provides copy of literature/EBP/research that was disseminated and either a completed record of staff training (form in Policy Stat) or a typed, narrative description of the date, time, location, audience, and name/contact information of supervisor that was present and/or can verify.

4. **Actively participates in an RHC committee** to improve patient care/quality outcomes (i.e. Falls Steering, unit-based councils, Sepsis, Chest Pain, Heart Failure, etc.).

(1 point each; Maximum 3 points)

Requirements: Submits proof of meeting participation/attendance from nursing leader/committee facilitator demonstrating consistent attendance and participation for a minimum of six months within the last 12 months.

5. Participates in an **EBP or research project at RHC**. (2 points)

Requirements: Provides a typed narrative (up to one page) describing the project's key points and outcomes/implications. Include a copy of your poster or presentation if applicable.

6. **Poster or presentation at a conference** outside of RHC.
(3 points)

Requirements: Provides a typed narrative (up to one page) describing the conference, date, location, audience. Include a copy of your poster or presentation.

7. Published in a **professional journal**. (3 points)

Requirements: Provide a copy of the article from a professional journal published within the last 12 months.

8. Achieves and/or maintains current job-specific, **competency-based certifications** (i.e. BLS, ACLS, PALS, NRP, CPI, etc.).
(1 point each; Maximum 3 points)

Requirements: Provide copy of all cards or certificates, noting that certification was obtained and/or is current.

Finance

1. Meets requirements of the **attendance and punctuality** policy.

(1 point)

Requirements: The applicant's and nursing leader's signature on the application serves as attestation of meeting the requirements of the Attendance and Punctuality policy.

2. **Manages time well**/avoids incremental overtime.

(1 point)

Requirements: The applicant's and nursing leader's signature on the application serves as attestation of meeting the requirements.

3. **Serves as charge** at least 30% shifts worked/flexes staffing to ensure fiscal responsibility.

(2 points)

Requirements: Must submit either a WFM report or screenshot from timesheet and/or staffing sheets reflecting dates of Unit Charge or documentation noting number of charge hours compared to total regular hours worked. The Nursing Leader's signature serves as secondary verification of the submitted evidence.

4. Submits narrative documenting participation in a **unit-based project focused on retention** with measurable outcomes.

(2 points)

Requirements: Provides a typed narrative (up to one page) describing your involvement and the project's stakeholders, timeline, objectives, and measurable financial outcomes/implications for retention. Include a copy of your poster or presentation if applicable.

5. Demonstrates flexibility by **adjusting schedule/shifts** to support unit needs.

(2 points)

Requirements: The nursing leader's signature on the Nursing Career Ladder application serves as verification of applicant's consistent flexibility during application period.

6. Participates in the **Lean Certificate Program**. (2 points)

Requirements: Provides a certificate of program completion dated within the last 12 months. If program is still in progress, provides an attendance report demonstrating consistent attendance and/or a note from the program facilitator verifying attendance and active participation within the last 12 months.

7. Presents an idea at **Riverside Shark Tank**. (2 points)

Requirements: Provides copy of PowerPoint presentation, any handouts and associated documents, with a narrative description of the idea and the presentation date (within the last 12 months), time, location, topic, audience, and proposed benefits (cost-savings, efficiency, etc.).

8. Submits narrative documenting participation in a **RHC project with measurable financial outcomes**.
(3 points)

Requirements: Provides a typed narrative (up to one page) describing your involvement and the project's stakeholders, timeline, objectives, and measurable financial outcomes/implications. Include a copy of your poster or presentation if applicable.

Growth

1. **Education** (select all):

- Enrolled - BSN/MSN/DNP (1 point)
- Non-Nursing Bachelor's degree (1 point)
- BSN (2 points)
- Non-Nursing Master's degree (2 points)
- MSN (3 points)
- DNP/other terminal degree (4 points)

Requirements: Provide copies of any and all diplomas showing graduation dates. For proof of current enrollment, provide copy of official or unofficial transcript and class schedule reflecting current enrollment.

2. Attends a **conference** outside of job requirements. (1 point)

Requirements: Provide evidence of conference attendance (written correspondence, continuing education certificates, etc.) and the name, date, location, sponsoring organization, and conference objectives.

3. **Shared Governance** involvement (select one):

- Council Member (1 point)
- Chair/Co-Chair (2 points)
- Facilitator (3 points)

Requirements: Submits a signed copy of the Shared Governance Council Commitment form and proof of meeting participation/attendance expectations from Magnet Program Manager or Council Facilitator/Chair.

4. Annual **Continuing Education** (select one):

- 15 contact hours (1 points)
- 20 contact hours (2 points)
- 25 contact hours (3 points)

Requirements: Provide certificates or other proof of completion of all nursing contact hours awarded within the last 12 months.

5. **Professional organizations:**

Member (1 point; Maximum 3 points)

Holds an office or serves on a committee (2 points)

Requirements: Provide a copy of current membership card or similar source of evidence for up to three professional nursing organizations (i.e. ANA, AACN, etc.) verifying current membership. For proof of office or committee involvement, provide documentation from a chapter officer or meeting minutes reflecting your office or role on the committee within the last 12 months.

6. Holds a **professional certification** recognized by ANCC on the [DDCT grid](#). (2 points each; Maximum 4 points)

Requirements: Provide a copy of the certificate, wallet card, or official award letter showing the dates in which the certification is valid and current at the time of application.

7. Obtains **REACH Level 3**. (2 points)

Requirements: Provide documentation validating REACH Level 3 status.

8. Attends continuing education events sponsored by **Well in Mind**. (1 each; Maximum 3 points)

Requirements: Provide proof of attendance (ex: OLIE attendance report – contact ODL for assistance) or provide a typed narrative including the date, time, location, topic, audience, contact name and information of the facilitator and what you gained from the presentation. Proof of attendance or a narrative is required each event (maximum of 3).