



PROMISING PRACTICE

Partnerships

Next Steps II Program at Cankdeska Cikana Community College

Establishing employer partnerships helps meet growing healthcare workforce demand.



Since its start, the **Next Steps II Project** (Next Steps) has placed a high value on employer engagement. The **HPOG**-funded program develops and maintains strong local partnerships. These employer partnerships allow Next Steps to prepare high-quality healthcare workers with the necessary skills to best serve their community.

The goal of Next Steps is to provide the opportunity for low-income citizens in North Dakota to access an “educational pathway.” This pathway leads participants to career advancement in health professions.

A 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Knife River Care Center and Next Steps is further shaping the way Next Steps engages with the employer community. The MOU coordinates services to provide training in the nursing career pathway. This partnership addresses critical workforce needs faced by Knife River as well as many other healthcare employers in West Central North Dakota. It also provides Knife River a recruitment funnel.

The Center screens individuals who apply to the on-campus training through Next Steps. Next Steps and Knife River work in tandem to identify motivated, qualified individuals to complete healthcare training programs responsive to the needs of this employer. Participants receive HPOG benefits, including school supplies, transportation, and childcare. Upon graduating, they are prepared to immediately fill positions at Knife River.

Next Steps plans to explore the feasibility of establishing a U.S. Department of Labor-recognized apprenticeship program with Knife River Care Center.

Mutually beneficial partnerships between Next Steps and local employers successfully address the shortage of qualified healthcare providers in the region.

This Promising Practice was self-identified by the grantee and information contained in this document was provided by the grantee.