NOVA | Northern Virginia Community College
Business Engagement and Career Services

Opportunities in Healthcare



Career Resources Guide

Introduction

As students navigate their academic journey, understanding career pathways is essential for making informed decisions about their future. Career planning involves recognizing industry trends, identifying potential employers, and equipping oneself with the necessary skills and qualifications to succeed in their selected field. This guide aims to provide an in-depth exploration of NOVA's six key career fields—Business and Finance, Construction & Skilled Trades, Healthcare, Information Technology, Public Administration, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)—highlighting top employers, in-demand job titles, resume, cover letter, and interview strategies, as well as programs of study (majors) at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) that lead to careers in each field. Beyond this guide, students can learn more information and opportunities in these key fields here.



Top Employers (by Number of Positions)

The following table lists the top employers in the healthcare industry based on number of positions. These organizations are known for contributing to their industries and offering competitive employment opportunities. The data reflects the organizations identified through the analysis of labor market information provided by the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) and Department of Employment Services (DOES).

1. Inova	6. Georgetown University Hospital
2. Somatus	7. Medstar Medical Group
3. Virginia Hospital Center	8. George Washington University Hospital
4. Children's National Medical Center	9. Sibley Memorial Hospital
5. Washington Hospital Center	10. Howard University Hospital

Note. This table is illustrative and not exhaustive. For comprehensive and up-to-date information, please refer to the respective organizations' publications.

Sources:

"Top 200 Employers Report 2023," District of Columbia Department of Employment Services

"Top 200 Employers Report 2024," District of Columbia Department of Employment Services

"Key Industries," Arlington Economic Development 2025

Top Job Titles



Understanding the most sought-after job titles in the healthcare industry can help students tailor their career preparation. Below are some key job titles in the DC Metro area, based on the latest data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

1. Registered Nurses
2. Home Health and Personal Care Aides
3. Nursing Assistants
4. Medical Assistants
5. Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
6. Medical and Health Services Managers
7. Physicians
8. Dental Assistants
9. Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
10. Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians

Note. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive. For comprehensive and up-to-date information, please refer to the respective organizations' publications.

Source:
May 2023 Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Area Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Resume and Cover Letter Tips

Resume and cover letter templates are widely available online, offering various options for different professional levels, including college students entering the workforce. Websites are available to provide resume and cover letter templates. When selecting a template, consider the following tips to ensure it highlights your strengths and aligns with your career goals:

Pick the Right Format:

- **Chronological:** Ideal for those with relevant work experience, as it highlights your job history. This format is popular among employers who value experience.
- **Functional:** Best for those with limited work experience or gaps in their employment history, as it focuses on skills rather than past positions.
- **Combination:** A balanced format that showcases both skills and experience. This is a good choice if you have some experience but also want to emphasize skills.

Know Your Audience: Different industries have different expectations. For example, a creative resume template may be suitable for graphic design roles, while a more professional template is better for industries like law or banking. When in doubt, choose a simple, clean design.

Play to Your Strengths: Choose a template that reflects your professional personality. The template should showcase your skills, interests, and experience in a way that feels authentic to you.

Ask for Feedback: Before finalizing your resume, seek input from the NOVA Career Services team. They can offer valuable perspectives on what works best.

Source:
Resume Templates, Hloom

Tailoring Your Resume and Cover Letter



Resume Tips

To make a healthcare resume stand out, your contact information should be placed in the body, not the header. Credentials should be listed in the correct order: highest degree earned, licensure, state designations, and national certifications. A strong, one-paragraph professional summary should open the resume, including years of experience, facility designations, supervisory experience, and relevant skills. Experience with Electronic Medical Record (EMR) software should also be listed.

Cover Letter Tips

A healthcare cover letter should showcase skills, experiences, and passion for the healthcare field. It's important to connect qualifications to the job description, demonstrating how unique abilities will benefit the company. The cover letter should emphasize dedication to patient care and readiness to contribute to the team. It is recommended to avoid generic cover letters, and ensure the letter expresses enthusiasm for the role and the healthcare field.

Sample Resume & Cover Letter

Your Full Name

Your City, State, ZIP
Your Email Address | Your Phone Number | LinkedIn Profile

Professional Summary

Compassionate and detail-oriented healthcare professional with clinical training and hands-on patient care experience through an associate degree program. Skilled in assisting with vital signs, administering medications, and documenting using Electronic Medical Records (EMR) systems such as Epic. Committed to providing high-quality, patient-centered care in fast-paced clinical environments. Proven ability to support diverse patient populations and collaborate effectively within multidisciplinary teams.

Mentions electronic medical records software experience

Summary mentions level of experience and skills

Credentials

Associate of Applied Science in Nursing (AAS) – May 2024
Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, VA

Licensure/Certifications:

- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) – State of Virginia (Pending)
- Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification – American Heart Association
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) – Virginia

Technical & Clinical Skills

Credentials listed in order

- Vital signs and patient monitoring
- Wound care and dressing changes
- Patient mobility and hygiene assistance
- Medication administration and documentation
- Epic and Cerner EMR systems
- HIPAA compliance and infection control

Clinical Experience

Student Nurse Intern
INOVA Alexandria Hospital – Alexandria, VA
January 2024 – April 2024 | 16 hrs/week

- Assisted RN staff with patient assessments and documentation using Epic EMR
- Provided bedside care including hygiene, feeding, and mobility support for up to 12 patients per shift
- Administered medications under supervision and monitored patients for adverse reactions
- Communicated patient needs and changes to healthcare team promptly and effectively

Volunteer Experience

Health & Wellness Volunteer
Capital Area Food Bank Health Screening Events – Washington, DC
September 2023 – December 2023 | 5 hrs/month

- Supported routine blood pressure and glucose screenings for low-income residents
- Provided culturally appropriate health education materials to community members

Your Full Name
Your City, State, ZIP
Your Email Address | Your Phone Number

Date: [Insert Date]

[Recipient's Name]
[Recipient's Title]
[Agency/Organization Name]
[Address]
City, State, ZIP

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I am writing to express my interest in the [Job Title] position at [Organization Name]. As a recent graduate with an Associate of Applied Science in Nursing from Northern Virginia Community College, I am excited to begin my career in healthcare and contribute to your team's mission of delivering compassionate, high-quality patient care.

Highlights skills and past experiences

During my clinical internship at INOVA Alexandria Hospital, I had the opportunity to work with a diverse patient population, assist with routine care, and support the nursing staff in a fast-paced unit. I am comfortable using Electronic Medical Record systems like Epic and take pride in ensuring accurate, confidential documentation. My hands-on experience includes medication administration, monitoring vital signs, and providing personal care with empathy and attention to detail.

Beyond clinical skills, I bring a strong commitment to teamwork and patient advocacy. I have volunteered at community health events, helping to deliver preventive care resources to underserved populations. I'm passionate about serving others and continually learning to enhance my effectiveness as a healthcare provider.

Shows dedication to patient care and desire to contribute

I am eager to bring my clinical knowledge, compassion, and energy to your organization. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to your team and learn from experienced professionals. Thank you for considering my application.

Displays enthusiasm for the role and the field

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Interview Tips

To prepare for a healthcare interview, it is important to research the employer and the organization's mission. It is also important to prepare for common questions such as "Tell me about yourself", "Why are you applying for this role?", "What are your strengths?", and "What are your weaknesses?". Candidates should show they're punctual by arriving 10 minutes early. When answering, be sure to highlight the value of care.

Sample questions for Healthcare Interviews:

1. How do you see the future of healthcare?

2. How do you stay informed on current healthcare advancements?

3. Tell me about yourself and how you realized you wanted to be a healthcare provider.

4. Why did you choose to work in the healthcare sector?

5. Have you already cared for a patient who did not disclose important information? How did you manage the situation, and what was the outcome?

6. Imagine you have to give bad news about a patient's health. How would you manage the situation?

7. Tell me about your experience with a patient who required a lot of your time. How did you care for this patient while still providing other patients with adequate care?

Source:
"7 Top Healthcare Interview Questions," Indeed

NOVA Programs of Study

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) offers specialized programs that align with workforce needs. These programs prepare students for entry-level positions and further academic advancement. The following information highlights the NOVA's programs of study that lead to the six career fields (NOVA, n.d.):

Business and Finance:

- Business Administration, A.S.
- Business Management, A.A.S.
- Business Management: Leadership Development, C.S.C.
- Business Management: Promotion and Public Relations, C.S.C.
- Contract Management, A.A.S.

Construction & Skilled Trades:

- n/a

Healthcare:

- Dental Assisting, Certificate
- Dental Hygiene, A.A.S.
- Diagnostic Medical Sonography: Abdominal Sonography-Extended and Obstetrics and Gynecology Sonography Specialization, A.A.S.
- Diagnostic Medical Sonography: Echocardiography Specialization, A.A.S.
- Diagnostic Medical Sonography: Vascular Sonography Specialization, A.A.S.
- Emergency Medical Services, A.A.S.
- Health Information Management, A.A.S.
- Health Information Management: Clinical Data Coding, C.S.C.
- Health Information Technology, C.S.C. (Discontinued Fall 2024)
- Health Sciences, A.S.
- Medical Laboratory Technology, A.A.S.
- Medical Laboratory Technology: Medical Laboratory Assistant (MLA), C.S.C.
- Medical Laboratory Technology: Phlebotomy, C.S.C.
- Nursing, A.A.S.
- Occupational Therapy Assistant, A.A.S.
- Physical Therapist Assistant, A.A.S.
- Radiation Oncology, A.A.S.
- Radiography, A.A.S.
- Respiratory Therapy, A.A.S.
- Veterinary Technology, A.A.S.

Information Technology:

- n/a

Public Administration:

- Early Childhood Development, A.A.S.
- Early Childhood Development, C.S.C.
- Early Childhood Development, Certificate
- Early Childhood Development: Infant and Toddler Care, C.S.C.
- Social Sciences: Deaf Studies Specialization, A.S.
- Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Counselor, Certificate

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics):

- Biology, A.S.
- Biotechnology Lab Technician, C.S.C.
- Biotechnology, A.A.S.
- Science, A.S.
- Science: Mathematics Specialization, A.S.
- Social Sciences, A.S.
- Social Sciences: Deaf Studies Specialization, A.S.

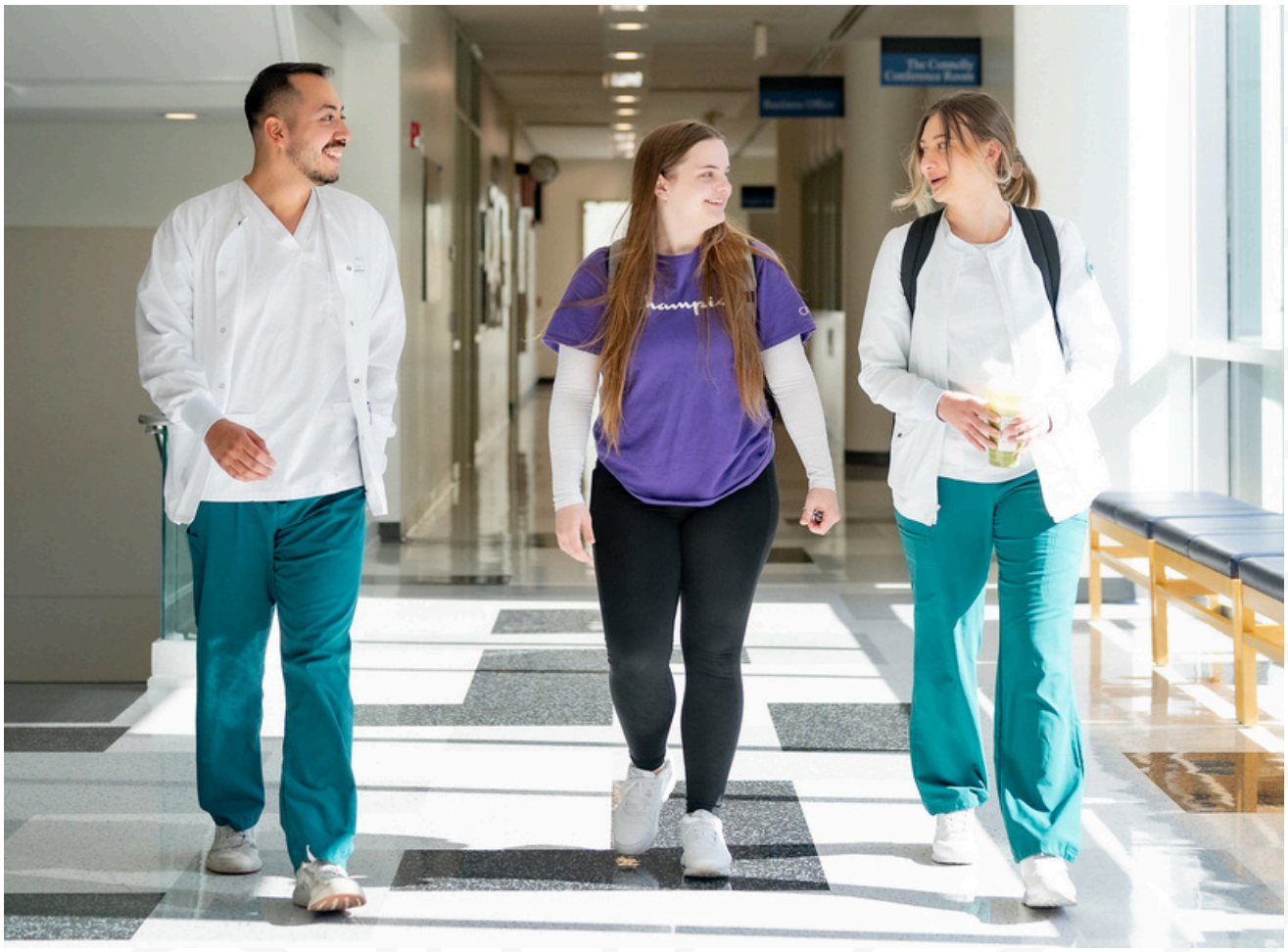
Source:
Programs of Study, Northern Virginia Community College

NOVA Programs of Study Leading to Specific Careers in the Healthcare Field

Opportunities	Non-Transfer Tracks	Transfer Tracks
Programs of study to support entry into these employment opportunities are currently offered at NOVA	*These career paths allow you to enter the workforce immediately after graduation from NOVA.*	*These career paths require transfer for additional education beyond NOVA.*
Registered Nurse, Nursing Assistant, Home Health & Personal Care Aides	Nursing, A.A.S.	Health Sciences, A.S. (foundational for various healthcare careers)
Physicians	N/A	Health Sciences, A.S. (best suited for pre-med students aiming for medical school)
Medical First Responder	Emergency Medical Services, A.A.S.	N/A
Respiratory Therapist	Respiratory Therapy, A.A.S.	N/A
Medical Assistants	Health Information Management, A.A.S. (for administrative medical assisting)	Health Sciences, A.S.
Occupational Therapy Assistant	Occupational Therapy Assistant, A.A.S.	N/A
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurse	Nursing, A.A.S. (LPNs may continue to RN programs)	N/A
Medical & Health Services Manager	Health Information Management, A.A.S.	N/A
Medical Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	Health Information Management, A.A.S. | Health Information Management: Clinical Data Coding, C.S.C.	N/A
Clinical Laboratory Technologists & Technicians	Medical Laboratory Technology, A.A.S. | Medical Laboratory Assistant (MLA), C.S.C. | Phlebotomy, C.S.C.	N/A
Sonographer	Diagnostic Medical Sonography, A.A.S.	N/A
Registered Technologist, Radiography	Radiography, A.A.S.	American Registry of Radiologic Technology (ARRT) Exam Required
Dental Assistants	Dental Assisting, Certificate	N/A
Dental Hygiene	Dental Hygiene, A.A.S.	N/A

Conclusion

Navigating career pathways requires careful planning, industry awareness, and continuous skill development. As community college students explore potential careers, leveraging available resources—such as NOVA's career services and industry connections—can significantly enhance employability. By understanding industry trends, aligning academic pursuits with workforce demands, and crafting effective job application materials, students can position themselves for long-term career success.



NOVA Career Resources



Career Development:

https://www.nvcc.edu/student-resources/career-services/career-development.html

Understand four key stages: understanding self, exploring careers & majors, decide & plan, and employment preparation. Students can use tools such as free career aptitude and assessment tests, Career Coach, Occupational Outlook Handbook, and Workforce - Labor Market Research to explore career options, set goals, and prepare for employment.

Career Planning System- Focus 2:

https://www.nvcc.edu/student-resources/career-services/focus2.html

FOCUS 2 is an online, interactive, self-guided career and education planning system that can help you select a program/major based on your interests and aspirations, discover occupations matching your personal preferences and attributes, map out your career plans, and make informed career decisions.

Handshake:

https://nvcc.joinhandshake.com/login

Sign in to Career Connection to search and apply to jobs and Internship, view and participate in career development workshops, career fairs, employer information sessions, and access resources such as the Resume Builder and Mock Interview practice tool.

Career Counseling:

https://www.nvcc.edu/student-resources/career-services/contact.html

Students can request an appointment with a Career Counselor by logging into Handshake, navigating to the Career Center page, and selecting “Appointments.”

NOVA Career Resources

Career Opportunities:

https://www.nvcc.edu/student-resources/career-services/career-opportunities.html

The Employer and Career Services Team is pleased to offer Career Opportunities for NOVA students and alumni! Review these opportunities and don't forget to log into Handshake to view more.

Coordinated Internships & Cooperative Education (Co-op):

https://www.nvcc.edu/student-resources/career-services/co-op/index.html

Coordinated Internships are an extension of Academic Services that provides work-based experiential learning opportunities through collaboration between academic departments and community employers. Students may enroll in Coordinated Internship course.

Career Events:

https://www.nvcc.edu/student-resources/career-services/career-events.html

View the Handshake Events Calendar for career development workshops, career fairs, employer information sessions, community hiring events (external) and more!

Additional Career Resources:

https://www.nvcc.edu/student-resources/career-services/career-resources.html

Contact Information

Questions? Feel free to contact novacareerservices@nvcc.edu.

