

## CHOOSING A PROFESSIONAL NURSING CAREER IN ARKANSAS

1. Decide what type of a Nurse you want to become and the type of Nursing program that you want to attend. Here are your choices:

### **Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) – Registered Nurse (RN):**

A 4-year college degree that includes nursing education and general education courses. Upon successful completion of the program, you can take the national licensing examination (NCLEX-RN) to become a registered nurse (RN).

**Pros:** The BSN degree may give you more job opportunities and an easier transition to graduate school where you can advance your nursing career and specialize in areas such as: a Nurse Practitioner, a Nurse Anesthetist, a Nurse Midwife, or a Clinical Nurse Specialist. These roles hold a higher nursing license and are Advanced Practice RNs with a higher level of license. Other advanced nursing career opportunities include Clinical Nurse Leader, Educator/Faculty, Researcher, Administrator, Informaticist, and many more!

**Cons:** There may be waiting lists for acceptance to BSN programs. Generally, a higher GPA is required.

### **Associates Degree in Nursing (ADN) – Registered Nurse (RN):**

A 2-year college degree that includes nursing education and general education courses. Upon successful completion of the program, you can take the national licensing examination (NCLEX-RN) to become a registered nurse (RN).

**Pros:** You can get a job in the healthcare field after 2 years of college and start working as an RN. Associate degree programs may be a less expensive pathway to becoming an RN.

**Cons:** Some hospitals require a BSN degree for newly graduated nurses. Job opportunities may be limited to long term care, mental health, doctor's office etc. and not the hospital inpatient setting.

You may return to school to obtain your BSN degree to meet your employer's requirements and to advance in your nursing career. RNs in these RN to BSN programs must take the required general education and nursing courses to fulfill the BSN degree requirements.

### **Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN):**

A 1-year college or pre-college education program that focuses on basic nursing skills. No college degree is awarded. Upon successful completion of the program, you can take the national licensing examination (NCLEX-PN) to become a licensed practical nurse (LPN).

**Pros:** You can get a job in the healthcare field after 1 year of school and start working as an LPN. You can provide basic nursing care and learn a lot about taking care of patients.

**Cons:** You will have limits on nursing tasks that you can perform, and the pay is lower for LPNs than for RNs. Job opportunities may be limited to long term care, mental health, doctor's office, and clinics. Although some hospitals do employ LPNs.

2. Find the schools in Arkansas that offer the program you want. Click here to locate all Nursing Schools in Arkansas:

<http://www.arsbn.org/nursing-programs>

Some nursing programs hold national nursing program accreditation. Accreditation is optional and often indicates the program has met more rigorous standards. Sometimes advancement to a higher degree requires graduation from an accredited program. Regional accreditation of the college or university is different from national nursing accreditation. Regional accreditation is optional and often indicates the college has met high educational standards.

3. For more information about the profession of nursing, visit the Arkansas Center for Nursing on Facebook at [arcenterfornursing](https://www.facebook.com/arcenterfornursing) and at <http://www.arcenterfornursing.com/about.html>  
Email: [arcenterfornursing@gmail.com](mailto:arcenterfornursing@gmail.com)

