



The Economics of Nurse Migration

Tracking the Costs and Contributions
of Immigrant Nurses in the United States

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About CGFNS International, Inc.

CGFNS International is an immigration neutral nonprofit organization that helps foreign educated healthcare professionals live and work in their country of choice by assessing and validating their academic and professional credentials. We provide foreign students and healthcare professionals with a comprehensive assessment of their academic records to facilitate their successful admission to schools in the US and other countries. We help protect migrating healthcare professionals by advocating for ethical recruitment practices and continuously monitoring the global landscape for developing trends in employment recruitment and workplace norms. CGFNS International is an NGO in Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which serves as the central forum for international and social issues.

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Executive Summary

Purpose

To help health systems administrators, policymakers, health professionals, and the public at large recognize and understand the economic contributions made by health worker immigrants. This manuscript highlights the economic impact of nurse immigrants—the contributions they make and the costs they must bear—throughout the trajectory of their migration/career journey. CGFNS survey data on the finances of foreign-educated nurses in the United States supplement this discussion.

Structure

The substance of the manuscript covers the enormous economic contributions that immigrant health workers make—along with the substantial financial obligations they face—throughout the trajectory of their migration journey (i.e., pre-departure, migration, arrival, and integration). This discussion will be supported by data from the literature, CGFNS knowledge/expertise, and CGFNS survey data.

In April 2023, we invited thousands of former CGFNS applicants to complete our survey, exploring their financial/economic experiences as nurse immigrants by capturing their country of education, salary range, budget breakdown (including remittances sent home), and driving reasons for their migration.

Key Takeaways



Workforce value

Nurse and health worker immigrants are a critical part of health systems worldwide, particularly in the Global North. The U.S. (and many other high-income countries) are increasingly reliant on the skills they bring and the care they provide.



Economic impact

The economic impact of nurse immigrants spans their migration and career trajectory, benefiting the individual, their host country, and their family and broader community back home.



Migration drivers

Survey respondents had three top choices when asked about their migration drivers:

31%	Familial
30%	Professional
25%	Economic



Recruiter utilization

Many foreign-educated nurses (FENs) choose to migrate with a recruiter due to the expense and complexity of the U.S. immigration process. **52%** of survey respondents used a recruitment firm.

55% of respondents who used a recruitment firm used a Certified Ethical Recruiter accredited by CGFNS' Alliance for Ethical International Recruitment Practices.

Woven into the discussion are two case studies aimed to humanize the nurse migration experience. They follow two foreign-educated nurses, one from the Philippines and the other from Kenya, and their varied experiences migrating to and working in the United States as they pertain to the financial cost and their economic contributions.

Key Takeaways



Annual salaries

26% of survey respondents said they made over **\$90,000** annually; for those that arrived in the past three years, the average salary was **\$65,700**. The overall salary average was **\$71,800**.



Licensure trends

21% of survey respondents indicated having been licensed in three or more countries. These emerged as top transit countries on the journey to the US: **United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore**.



Remittances

66% of survey respondents sent money home to friends and family on a regular basis. Across all salary levels, the most common amount was up to **10% of their monthly salary**.