

Projection Tool Background and Sources
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Data from the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) were used to calculate the percent of employed RNs with a bachelor's degree in nursing or graduate degree in any field. The number of respondents per state varies in this survey, and for some states, the margin of error in the survey is relatively large.

We also searched for data collected directly by states. When these data were either newer than the 2015 American Community Survey or produced a higher estimate, we used the state data. Note that some states do not report data that are exactly comparable to the ACS calculation. For example, some state reports include both employed and non-working RNs, and some only consider nursing degrees (the ACS includes graduate degrees in non-nursing fields). We relied upon the ACS when a state's data was before 2015 and had a lower value than the ACS. This applied to CT, HI, IL, IN, NE, NV, NY, PN, and SC.

The national average of the share of RNs with a BSN in nursing or graduate degree was 53.2% in 2015. The 95% confidence interval is 52.5% to 53.8%.

For states for which we relied upon the ACS, we designated a state as having a BSN percentage "above average" if its 95% confidence interval was entirely above the upper bound of the national confidence interval (53.8%). We designated a state as having a BSN percentage "below average" if its 95% confidence interval was entirely below the lower bound of the national confidence interval (52.5%).

For states that provided such data, we designated a state as having a BSN percentage "above average" if their data was at least one percentage points higher than the upper bound of the national confidence interval (53.8%), and "below average" if their data was at least one percentage point lower than the lower bound of the national confidence interval (52.5%). One exception to this rule is Hawaii, for which the 2013 state data was higher than the national upper bound by nearly 6 percentage points, and the 2015 ACS was even higher but its confidence interval was not above the national upper bound. Given the consistency of the two estimates, we identify Hawaii as above the national average. Another exception is Louisiana, for which the state report is 51% (only slightly below one point less than the lower bound) and the national ACS estimate is above the national lower bound.

* A 95% confidence interval is the range of values for which there is only a 5% chance that the true value is outside that range. When a dataset has a small number of observations, the confidence interval tends to be large; when the dataset has a large number of observations, the confidence interval tends to be small. For example, there are 3,137 observations in the data for California, and the confidence interval is 54.4% to 58.6%. There are only 94 observations for Delaware, and the confidence interval is 39.8% to 63.9%.

Percentage			Percentage		
State	BSN+	95% CI	State	BSN+	95% CI
Alabama*	45.8%		Missouri*	56.3%	
Alaska*	61.0%		Montana	51.3%	37.4-65.0%
Arizona	53.2%	48.3-58.1%	Nebraska	67.2%	58.1-75.1%
Arkansas*	40.0%		Nevada	59.1%	50.8-66.9%
California*	61.5%		New Hampshire	49.3%	40.6-58.1%
Colorado	60.2%	55.1-65.1%	New Jersey*	61.1%	
Connecticut	56.5%	50.9-61.9%	New Mexico	51.1%	40.7-61.4%
Delaware*	63.5%		New York	53.0%	50.3-55.7%
District of Columbia*	67.0%		North Carolina*	51.3%	
Florida*	45.7%		North Dakota	69.8%	55.8-81.0%
Georgia	54.9%	50.8-58.9%	Ohio*	57.0%	
Hawaii	62.9%	53.0-71.7%	Oklahoma	45.8%	39.0-52.7%
Idaho*	62.2%		Oregon*	55.4%	
Illinois	57.6%	54.4-60.8%	Pennsylvania	51.2%	48.0-54.5%
Indiana	52.1%	47.5-56.7%	Rhode Island	50.8%	40.5-60.9%
Iowa*	41.2%		South Carolina	46.5%	41.1-52.0%
Kansas*	60.5%		South Dakota*	49.2%	
Kentucky	46.0%	40.8-51.3%	Tennessee	51.8%	47.3-56.3%
Louisiana*	51.0%		Texas*	55.5%	
Maine*	51.4%		Utah*	52.6%	
Maryland	59.4%	55.0-63.7%	Vermont*	43.5%	
Massachusetts*	58.2%		Virginia*	54.9%	
Michigan*	62.3%		Washington	56.6%	52.0-61.1%
Minnesota*	65.0%		West Virginia	51.5%	43.3-59.6%
Mississippi	50.2%	43.6-56.8%	Wisconsin*	57.5%	
			Wyoming	38.3%	21.5-58.5%

* Data obtained from state-level sources.

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