

PNCB's Journey to Strengthen Pediatric Nursing



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2025

**Fairness and
Inclusivity
Update Report**

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About PNCB

The Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) is the largest and most essential organization for the certification, continuing education, and competency development of nursing professionals who provide care for children, adolescents, and young adults. The organization's mission is to be a driving force for quality in pediatric nursing globally. Since 1975, PNCB has been setting the standard for pediatric nursing excellence. PNCB has also been recognized as a Great Place to Work® company for four consecutive years. For more information visit [PNCB.org](https://www.pncb.org).



A Message from PNCB

Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Guided by our strategic goals and core values, PNCB remains dedicated to supporting an inclusive pediatric nursing workforce and the diverse populations they serve.

This report highlights PNCB's continued progress and commitment to advancing fairness and inclusion, work that requires ongoing reflection, adaptation, and action.

Our actions are anchored in two guiding commitments:

- The heart of pediatric nursing is supporting all children, adolescents, and young adults so they can thrive.
- A diverse and well-prepared nursing workforce improves outcomes for patients, families, and professionals.

PNCB's mission is to be a driving force for quality in pediatric nursing globally. As our reach grows, so does our commitment to fairness and inclusion – ensuring nurses everywhere feel welcomed, valued, and empowered to advance child health.

The infographic is set against a red background and features three blue circular icons. The first icon shows two stylized figures holding hands, representing the vision. The second icon shows a mountain peak with a flag on top, representing the mission. The third icon shows a gear with a person inside, representing the core values.

VISION
A healthier world one child at a time.

MISSION
A driving force for quality in pediatric nursing globally.

CORE VALUES

Integrity: Acting with honesty and taking accountability for all we do and say.

Quality: Promoting excellence throughout all our interactions.

Innovation: Providing visionary leadership for the present and future.

Advocacy: Supporting and promoting the pediatric nursing profession.

Respect: Embracing collaboration and diversity.

PNCB’s 2022–2027 Strategic Plan: Goal 2



Cultivate a diverse, equitable, and inclusive PNCB community to enrich the PNCB experience

Develop a culture of diversity and inclusion that fosters a sense of purpose, provides fulfillment, and supports a growing community of pediatric professionals

- Define value proposition and commitment for employees, certificants, and other key stakeholders
- Develop policies, processes, and practices that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion and create a culture of engagement, satisfaction, and resiliency
- Engage stakeholders in two-way communications highlighting ongoing DEI commitment and progress
- Develop measures of representation achieved across the PNCB community and in product and service offerings

PNCB’s Process






Work Completed and Next Steps

Create a DEI Roadmap

To realize PNCB’s 2022–2027 Strategic Plan Goal #2 to *Cultivate a diverse, equitable, and inclusive PNCB community to enrich the PNCB experience*, we developed a roadmap to describe key milestones and future activities which examine and exemplify fairness in services and products.





Just as PNCB celebrates the many wonderful ways a child or adolescent is an individual, the organization also celebrates nursing professionals and the unique background, experiences, and perspectives they offer.

[Access the DEI Roadmap>>](#)

	<p>What?</p> <p>A roadmap infographic was developed to help chart the course for our journey in the fairness space.</p>
	<p>Why?</p> <p>A roadmap documents our progress publicly for all stakeholders and serves as a framework for our efforts.</p>
	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>PNCB will continue to update the roadmap as we achieve milestones.</p>

Collect Data

Adding questions about aspects of stakeholders' backgrounds was a big first step for PNCB's DEI roadmap. This facilitated data collections that will inform next actions such as publicizing the aggregate data and using the numbers for volunteer composition benchmarking.

	<p>What?</p> <p>New questions were added to PNCB applications for the exams and annual recertification. These additional questions include subspecialty, race/ethnicity, and topics of professional interest. Questions about role, employment setting, years of experience, and related characteristics were already being tracked.</p>
	<p>Why?</p> <p>PNCB needs a complete picture of the stakeholders it serves to meaningfully grow and strengthen the profession and analyze outcomes to detect any disparities.</p>
	<p>Results</p> <p>Robust, aggregate data sets were collected and analyzed for use in next steps such as sharing findings publicly and using the numbers for volunteer composition benchmarking.</p>
	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>PNCB will continue to monitor data trends related to its exam candidate and certificant community.</p>





Report Certificant Demographics

In 2022, PNCB compiled a demographic profile of certificants—the largest of its kind—for the pediatric specialty. Comprising nearly 54,000 nursing professionals, the report included ethnic, racial, and gender; age and experience; education; subspecialties; professional topics of interest; and other factors.

The report data allowed PNCB to measure a variety of characteristics that make up the pediatric registered and advanced practice nurse populations.

PNCB staff can use the findings in many ways, including inform stakeholders and the public, compare pediatric specialty data to nursing overall, benchmark diversity within our volunteer base, and explore ideas to encourage people with different backgrounds and life experiences to consider pediatric nursing as a career.





[Access the Report>>](#)

	What? An aggregate profile of certified pediatric nursing professionals was compiled in 2022 after the most recent annual recertification period. New certificants who recently passed the exam and were not yet eligible for recertification were included.
	Why? A more complete demographics picture of PNCB-certified nurses feeds into strategies to support growing the specialty. The report also helps PNCB set realistic areas of focus around fairness and equality. Analyzing the latest data on subspecialty practice areas and what nurses are passionate about can assist PNCB in identifying topics for continuing education, webinars, microcredentials, and certificate programs.
	Results Several findings reported that pediatric nurses are predominantly White (79%) and female (96%), which markedly differs from the demographics of U.S. youth.
	Next Steps PNCB will continue to use the data to inform outreach efforts and to focus on how we can support increasing nurses' knowledge of areas that will help them provide better care to their patient populations.

Benchmark Volunteer Demographics





Shortly after the certificant profile was completed, PNCB benchmarked demographics within its volunteer base, from item writers and committee members to the Board of Directors composition and Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN) Champion ambassadors.

All current volunteer groups—more than 500 individuals—were benchmarked. Item writers are a key group, critical to the development of exam questions that reflect current practice. The group was analyzed in depth, spanning those who volunteered from 2008 to 2021. This was particularly helpful to assess whether the group demographics had changed since PNCB’s strategic commitment to inclusion and fairness. The PNCB team learned that the percentages for many ethnicities had increased over time to better reflect the patient population and the profession. This aligns with accreditation standards and best practices for professional certification organizations.

	What? PNCB used the overall certificant demographic report to analyze how volunteer groups compared.
	Why? To determine how those numbers compare to the PNCB certificant base as a whole and consider strategies to engage in outreach designed to increase diversity within PNCB committees.
	Results Year over year, diversity within volunteer groups (on average) has increased. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer participation by males (currently at just over 5%) has improved.• CPN Champions were the most diverse across volunteer groups, followed by several CPNP-PC and CPNP-AC groups: Competency Framework, Job Task Analysis, external item writers, and Form Review groups.• Opportunities for improvements exist for Native American/Indigenous, Middle Eastern, North African, and Asian population representation.
	Next Steps PNCB will continue to use overall certificant data to benchmark volunteer demographics, evaluate trends, and analyze where increased outreach may be needed. <i>Note that PNCB volunteer recruitment is not quota-based.</i>





Affirm PNCB Staff's Role in Fairness and Inclusivity

As a Great Place to Work® Certified™ organization for the past four years, PNCB invests in its staff with workshops and activities to support a culture of inclusion.

	<p>What?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In recent years, PNCB has provided unconscious bias training, wellness workshops, and other learning opportunities.• Staff are kept informed on DEI initiatives across the organization, including Board of Directors activities.• PNCB's policies prohibit discrimination and offer accommodations to staff members with disabilities.• Staff work cross-departmentally to accomplish fairness and inclusivity, and other operational goals related to the strategic plan.• PNCB's core values of <i>Respect</i> and <i>Quality</i> align with staff efforts to support collaboration and promote excellence in all of our interactions.
	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teams thrive in a workplace culture free of bias.• Increasing staff members' knowledge base about fairness and inclusivity supports their interactions with each other and stakeholders.• Working across teams creates a sense of togetherness and purpose.
	<p>Results</p> <p>During the Great Place to Work® certification process for PNCB, 100% of staff report that they are treated fairly regardless of their race, gender, age, or sexual orientation, and that management has a clear view of where the organization is going and how to get there.</p>
	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>PNCB will continue to offer meaningful ways for staff to interact, learn, and experience a genuine sense of belonging.</p>





Strengthen Volunteer Engagement

In PNCB volunteer recruitment campaigns, new messaging was introduced to clearly demonstrate the organization's commitment to inclusion and an authentic community of belonging.

	<p>What?</p> <p>When it comes to volunteer opportunities, from special task force work to item writing and committees to Board of Directors leadership, PNCB encourages leaders from all types of pediatric nursing settings, regions, and a multitude of diverse life experiences and backgrounds to apply. PNCB values and seeks diverse leadership and regards diversity as encompassing the full range of backgrounds, perspectives, and life experiences that nurses bring to their roles. PNCB welcomes leaders of any race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, nationality, disability, appearance, geographic location, and professional level to apply.</p>
	<p>Why?</p> <p>PNCB is committed to encouraging applicants from all walks of life to get involved, especially as nursing professionals provide care to a pediatric population with a full range of backgrounds.</p>
	<p>Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of volunteer applicants based on identified diversity factors has increased.• Diversity across PNCB's appointed volunteer base has also increased.• One of the organization's newest volunteers shared that she had initially been hesitant to get involved; however, PNCB's public statement affirming a commitment to inclusion provided the encouragement and reassurance she needed to engage.
	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>PNCB will continue to support an inclusive, welcoming volunteer recruitment process.</p>





Offer DEI-related Continuing Education

PNCB amplifies pediatric nursing knowledge through our in-depth catalog of free and low-cost online continuing education (CE) modules. Anyone can access PNCB's CE offerings, and registered nurse (RN) and nurse practitioner students are encouraged to take advantage of PNCB's pediatric-focused learning. With the 2022–2027 strategic plan's DEI goal, PNCB has looked for new ways to provide evidence-based DEI-related information into standalone modules.

	<p>What?</p> <p>CE needs surveys, current events, and challenges facing the pediatric population help PNCB identify topics to support nurses' awareness and skills related to DEI.</p>
	<p>Why?</p> <p>Access to information about children and families facing disparities as well as information about the care needs of specific populations strengthens pediatric nursing care.</p>
	<p>Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PNCB free CE modules about DEI topics exceeded engagement goals for the number of orders and resulted in orders beyond the traditional certificant base. Orders beyond 5,000 are exceptional. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 13,800 participants: <i>The Effects of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health</i> ○ 6,600 participants: <i>Increasing Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Pediatric Nursing Workforce</i> • Examples of PNCB low-cost modules available now and in the past 3 years include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Caring for Black Children with Autism and Their Families</i> ○ <i>Social Determinants of Health in Children with Complex Care and Technology Needs</i> ○ <i>Transgender & Gender Diverse Children & Adolescents</i>
	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>PNCB will continue to deliver high quality CE on various topics in support of PNCB's strategic plan DEI commitment.</p>





Celebrate Diversity in PNCB Social Media

Through Facebook and Instagram, PNCB celebrates certified nurses and the groups with which they self-identify, such as African American/Black History Month, LGBTQIA+ Pride, Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month, Native American and Alaskan Native Heritage Month, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, International Men's Day, Autism and Neurodiversity Awareness Month, Military Appreciation Month, among other groups.

	What? PNCB has maintained a DEI focus on its social media channels by celebrating a variety of awareness and recognition dates. These posts are often accompanied by photos of PNCB-certified nurses. When submitting photos, nurses can opt to self-identify with a wide range of diverse communities.
	Why? PNCB celebrates nurses and wants to raise awareness about the rich tapestry of backgrounds that make up the profession. Demonstrating that pediatric nursing embraces inclusivity can also interest students in choosing the pediatric specialty.
	Results These celebrations result in high social media engagement.
	Next Steps PNCB will continue to highlight awareness events and recognize individuals self-identifying with diverse communities.

Support Inclusive Scholarships and Awards





PNCB offers scholarships and a team-based award with a focus on the importance of inclusion within the pediatric specialty. All eligible candidates are considered.

	<p>What?</p> <p>PNCB enhanced its scholarship and award programs to support all certified nurses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Nurse (RN) Student Empowerment Scholarship • Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP) Opportunity & Engagement Award (with the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners Foundation) • Building a Better Workplace (Team) Award • Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN) Certification Advocate Award • Kelly Reed Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Community Impact Award.
	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an interest in and providing financial support for pediatric nurses from various backgrounds and experiences increases awareness about the rewarding specialty of pediatrics. • Celebrating teams that cultivate a fair and inclusive workplace for nurses and their colleagues spotlights localized efforts and can help other teams learn about strategies to attract and retain staff.
	<p>Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the Registered Nurse (RN) student scholarship, PNCB had to rely on our certificant base to share this opportunity because RN students are generally not in the certificant database. With 157 applications in its first year, this program outperformed PNCB's other award programs and continues to exceed expectations. • For the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP) student scholarship, PNCB relied on certificants and faculty to share the opportunity since many students were not yet in the database. Application rates exceeded expectations. • The team-based award continues to yield robust applications that describe successful strategies and outcomes for inclusivity.
	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>PNCB will continue to enhance our recognition programs to broaden fairness and inclusivity.</p>

Assess PNCB Exams for Fairness





In 2024, PNCB engaged Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) to conduct a thorough review of each certification exam's item banks (exam questions). The purpose was to identify any trends in item content possibly linked to unintentional bias. This process looked for any question level statistical performance issues related to potential bias for testers in certain categories. DRC analyzed the banks for the tester categories of U.S. geographic location and race/ethnicity to support the psychometric fairness and reliability of our examinations.

DRC completed this differential item functioning (DIF) analysis in 2025. A panel for each credential then participated in a web-based training and discussion. These PNCB-certified subject matter experts from diverse backgrounds, geographic locations, subspecialties, and healthcare settings then provided feedback on the items DRC had selected for review.

	What? To ensure that questions on PNCB's exams are fair and valid for all testers, a respected independent company conducted a differential item functioning (DIF) analysis using rigorous methodology. A panel of expert certificants for each credential reviewed and discussed the selected items. Based on PNCB's research, this type of analysis exceeds what most nursing certification boards do.
	Why? To identify trends related to potential item bias concerns in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Geographic location in the United States• Race or ethnicity
	Results <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PNCB exams are strong and fair. No single, clear source of any differential performance was identified during the review.• Subject matter expert conversations provided insight into common factors within the item sets that may help PNCB to better understand the many factors shaping the knowledge a nurse brings to the exam, like educational program, subspecialty, setting, size of setting, prior experience, and more.
	Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore additional training for exam item writers for awareness of factors that can influence tester performance.• Consider repeating the analyses in five years.• Consider further analyses by years of experience, practice setting (i.e., urban vs. rural), or educational program or institution that may provide insight into how nurses acquire knowledge and skills.

Train Item Writers to Avoid Bias in Exam Content





As part of the 2024–2025 work with DRC, PNCB developed and delivered training for item writer volunteers on how to avoid bias in exam questions.

	<p>What?</p> <p>PNCB acted on DRC’s recommendation to equip item writers with the skills to recognize and avoid bias in exam question content.</p>
	<p>Why?</p> <p>To continue to ensure that questions on PNCB’s exams are fair and valid for all testers.</p>
	<p>Results</p> <p>In late 2024, a total of 35 item writers completed the training.</p>
	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>Training will continue for all new item writers. On-going training is being explored.</p>

Review the Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner-Acute Care (CPNP-AC) Exam for Potential Critical Care Bias

People typically think of equity and fairness in terms of race, ethnicity, or gender, but subspecialties are also a category where fairness matters, especially on exams. PNCB listens intently to feedback and takes action to explore any stakeholder concerns.

In 2024, a group of acute care pediatric nurse practitioner (PNP) faculty members expressed concern that several of the current Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner-Acute Care (CPNP-AC) Exam Committee members worked in intensive care (ICU)/critical care settings, which could lead to the perception that the exam could potentially favor critical care content or testers with experience in critical care settings. PNCB acted promptly to assemble an advisory panel and explore the possibility of any issues. No bias toward critical care was found.

	<p>What?</p> <p>PNCB recruited and assembled a diverse panel of CPNP-AC practitioners to gain a neutral assessment of the number of acute care items with content specific to critical care settings.</p> <p>A panel of 17 CPNP-ACs reviewed 42% of the item bank (exam questions) using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the content of this item represent a situation that would only be managed in a critical care setting?• Collectively, are the items you reviewed relevant to today's variety of acute care settings where CPNP-ACs practice?
	<p>Why?</p> <p>To address stakeholder perception that the CPNP-AC exam could possibly favor critical care content or testers with experience in critical care settings.</p>
	<p>Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only 7 questions (less than 5% of items reviewed) were identified as critical care specific, which is an appropriate number based on the latest job task analysis and resulting exam content outline.• All panelists agreed that the item set was representative of the many settings where CPNP-ACs practice.
	<p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure findings are communicated to the acute care PNP community and faculty.• Continue to recruit and select CPNP-AC item writers who represent a variety of acute care practice settings.





Audit and Continually Review PNCB Materials

PNCB engaged Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) to review key public-facing communications in 2024 through the lens of fairness and inclusivity. Their task was to examine the exam candidate handbook, website, and application process/web portal. DRC shared their findings in 2025 that PNCB's materials performed well against DRC criteria with no noteworthy issues of an urgent or immediate nature.

Their approach was methodical and thorough, using these criteria to audit how we present information to nurses and other stakeholders:




- **Clarity:** Materials should be framed in a manner that is clear and easy to understand. This involves using plain language, avoiding jargon, and providing concise explanations.
- **Sensitivity:** Materials should be created with an awareness of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the audience. This includes being mindful of cultural differences, avoiding stereotypes, and addressing topics with empathy and respect.
- **Representativeness:** Materials should reflect the diversity of the audience. This includes perspectives and representation across the industry, creating content that resonates with the audience and promotes inclusivity.
- **Comprehensiveness:** Materials should cover all necessary aspects of the topic. This involves providing detailed information, addressing potential questions, and ensuring that no critical points are overlooked.
- **Accessibility:** Materials should be accessible to everyone, such that all users can effectively engage with the content. This can involve using accessible formats, providing alternative text for images, and ensuring compatibility with assistive technologies.

Audit and Continually Review PNCB Materials (*continued*)

	<h3>What?</h3> <p>PNCB engaged DRC to review the exam candidate handbook, website, and application process and portal through the lens of multiple measures of fairness:</p> <table><tr><td>Situational Bias</td><td>Race</td><td>Socioeconomic Status</td><td>Ethnicity</td><td>Abilities and Disabilities</td></tr><tr><td>Age</td><td>Physical Features</td><td>Gender</td><td>Social Roles</td><td>Education</td></tr><tr><td>Occupation</td><td>Other Characteristics</td><td>Language Skills</td><td>Country of Origin</td><td>Cultural Experiences</td></tr><tr><td>Religion</td><td>Geography/ Region</td><td>Family Structure</td><td>Weight</td><td>(and more)</td></tr></table>	Situational Bias	Race	Socioeconomic Status	Ethnicity	Abilities and Disabilities	Age	Physical Features	Gender	Social Roles	Education	Occupation	Other Characteristics	Language Skills	Country of Origin	Cultural Experiences	Religion	Geography/ Region	Family Structure	Weight	(and more)
Situational Bias	Race	Socioeconomic Status	Ethnicity	Abilities and Disabilities																	
Age	Physical Features	Gender	Social Roles	Education																	
Occupation	Other Characteristics	Language Skills	Country of Origin	Cultural Experiences																	
Religion	Geography/ Region	Family Structure	Weight	(and more)																	
	<h3>Why?</h3> <p>To ensure that content is informative, respectful, inclusive, and accessible to all users.</p>																				
	<h3>Results</h3> <p>Although no noteworthy issues of an immediate or urgent nature were found, opportunities for improvement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exam candidate handbook: Reduce language load and consider providing information in a variety of formats/media (e.g., video, infographics) to support learner styles.• Website: Add image descriptions (alternative text) and address formatting elements that interfere with screen reader functionality to support accessibility and user-centered designs. Provide synchronized captioning for embedded videos. Ensure text/background color contrast compliance.• Application process/web portal: Ensure text/background color contrast compliance and increase text size.																				
	<h3>Next Steps</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider ongoing reviews of materials.• Explore continuing and expanding learning opportunities related to identifying fairness concerns for all staff and volunteers.• Expand feedback opportunities.																				

Conduct a Legal Review of PNCB Programs

PNCB engaged with legal counsel to review PNCB programs related to the 2025 national diversity Executive Orders. The PNCB website, continuing education, and exam content outlines were also included in this review.

	<p>What?</p> <p>PNCB engaged an expert legal team to evaluate any risks associated with our programs and the website.</p>
	<p>Why?</p> <p>To protect stakeholders as well as PNCB’s services and products.</p>
	<p>Results</p> <p>The results of the legal review endorsed PNCB’s practices, while also providing additional steps for consideration.</p>

Advancing Our Profession Together

Seen, Supported and Empowered: Building a Future Where Every Nurse and Every Child Thrives

Together, PNCB and nursing professionals share a commitment to excellence, integrity, and inclusion in pediatric nursing. We invite you to reflect on how fairness and inclusivity principles are incorporated in your own practice and how, collectively, we can advance a profession where every nurse—and every patient—feels seen, supported, and empowered. Thank you for being part of this important journey with PNCB.