

Your First Travel Assignment Checklist

45 things to do before day one — so nothing falls through the cracks

Nursing + Allied Health | 2026 Edition

Junxion Med Staffing | junxionmedstaffing.com | (817) 242-0300

Your Pre-Assignment Timeline

Here's what a typical first assignment timeline looks like from application to day one:

- Week 1-2** Apply, interview with recruiter, review available assignments
- Week 2-3** Accept assignment, start credentialing paperwork
- Week 3-5** License verification, background check, drug screen, skills testing
- Week 5-6** Credentialing complete, finalize housing, travel arrangements
- Week 6-7** Arrive, settle in, facility orientation, first shift

First-timer note: This timeline can move faster (3-4 weeks total) if your credentials are current and you have compact license states. Junxion's team handles the paperwork — you just provide the documents.

1 Credentials & Licensing (Items 1-12)

- Verify your professional license is current and won't expire during assignment
- Check if your state has a Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) agreement — if yes, your license works in 40+ states
- If no NLC: apply for a temporary or expedited license in the assignment state (your recruiter helps with this)
- Confirm BLS/ACLS/PALS certifications are current (most facilities require BLS minimum)
- Gather specialty certifications (CCRN, CEN, CNOR, ARRT, ARDMS, etc.) — scan copies
- Get 2 professional references ready (supervisors who can verify clinical competency)
- Complete facility-required skills checklists for your specialty
- Schedule physical exam if required (TB test, immunization records)
- Complete drug screening at an approved facility
- Authorize background check (criminal + OIG/SAM exclusion check)

- Upload all documents to your agency portal (don't wait — do this immediately)

- Confirm your Social Security card and government-issued ID are current and accessible

2 Housing & Living Arrangements (Items 13-22)

- Decide: agency-provided housing or take the stipend and find your own place
- If taking stipend: search Furnished Finder, Airbnb, or corporate housing sites near your facility
- Confirm lease length matches your 13-week assignment (avoid 12-month lease traps)
- Check that housing is within 50 miles of your facility (IRS tax home requirement)
- Verify what's included: furniture, Wi-Fi, utilities, parking, washer/dryer
- Research the neighborhood: grocery stores, gym, pharmacy, urgent care within 10 minutes
- Set up mail forwarding from your permanent address to your assignment address
- Notify your bank/credit card companies about your temporary address change
- If driving: confirm parking at the facility (free vs. paid, where to park on night shift)
- Pack light but smart — see the packing list in Section 5 below

3 Finances & Tax Prep (Items 23-30)

- Maintain a tax home (keep your permanent residence — this is what makes stipends tax-free)
- Document your tax home: keep mortgage/rent receipts, utility bills, voter registration at home address
- Set up a travel expense tracker (mileage, receipts, housing costs) from day one
- Understand your pay breakdown: base pay (taxable) vs. stipends (tax-free if tax home maintained)
- Ask your recruiter to walk you through the full package math — not just the headline number
- Find a travel-nurse-friendly CPA or tax professional (your recruiter can recommend one)
- Set aside 25-30% of your base pay for federal/state taxes (don't get surprised at tax time)
- Review your health insurance options: agency-provided plan, private marketplace, or stay on current plan

Tax home rule of thumb: If you duplicate living expenses (paying rent at home AND at your assignment), your stipends are tax-free. If you give up your home and only live at assignments,

those stipends become taxable. Keep your tax home.

4 Facility & Orientation Prep (Items 31-38)

- Get your orientation date, time, and location from your recruiter (some facilities do virtual pre-orientation)
- Ask about the EMR system (Epic, Cerner, Meditech) and request training access before your start date
- Research the facility: bed count, trauma level, patient population, unit culture
- Find out your unit's typical nurse-to-patient ratio and acuity level
- Confirm your shift schedule: days vs. nights, 3x12s vs. 4x10s, weekend rotation
- Ask about scrub color requirements (some facilities have unit-specific colors)
- Get your badge/ID process started — some facilities mail temp badges, others require in-person setup
- Download the facility's mobile app if they have one (many use Vocera, TigerConnect, or similar)

5 Packing Essentials (Items 39-45)

- 3-4 sets of scrubs (facility-approved color) + 1 set of business casual for orientation
- Comfortable, broken-in nursing shoes (not new — break them in before day one)
- Stethoscope, penlight, badge reel, compression socks, watch with second hand
- Copies of ALL credentials (physical and digital — keep originals at your tax home)
- Laptop, phone charger, portable Wi-Fi hotspot (some housing has spotty internet)
- Kitchen basics if taking stipend housing: pan, pot, utensils, coffee maker (or buy cheap on arrival)
- Personal comfort items: pillow, blackout curtains (essential for night shift), white noise machine

Night shift survival kit: Blackout curtains are non-negotiable. A white noise machine and blue-light-blocking glasses make the difference between sleeping 4 hours and sleeping 7. Invest in these before your first night rotation.

Questions about your first assignment?

Talk to a Junxion recruiter. We walk first-timers through every step — credentials, housing, pay, all of it. No pressure, no commitment.

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This checklist is for informational purposes. Requirements vary by facility and state.